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GRELLA ON THE MOVE

On the move to possibly AC Milan or Fiorentina for Socceroo star Vince Grella.

Aussie midfielder Vince Grella admits he is looking to move to a big club over the off-season. Grella is out of contract at Empoli and told AAP.

"It's really hard to say at this stage, because I don't know what Empoli's ideas are. "If they have a project to build a team to go straight back up - which I doubt - I might stay on another year.

"Maybe after four years of being there, a bit of fresh air won't do me any harm. I said to them, 'leave me alone for 10 days and we'll talk after the Adelaide games'."

He added, "I would like to stay in Italy but I'm not going to play for another Empoli. "I want to move to a club that's got ambitions, where I can grow as well. I've thought about moving, but I've always wanted to play in Italy. I'm enjoying my football and I'm getting a lot of recognition in Italy, which isn't easy."

OUR VIERI

Max Vieri shown in his debut match for the Socceroos against Turkey last week.
Read more on Page 5

CAHILL'S FA CUP FAIRYTALE ENDS

Close but no cigar: Australian midfielder Tim Cahill battled hard but failed to win any silverware after last week's three-nil FA Cup Final loss to English giants Manchester United. Was this to be Cahill's last match for Millwall?
Read more on Page 14

TIATTO TATTERS

Poor Danny Tiatto shown leaving the field after fracturing his jaw hammering his off-season break from the world game.

Australian international Danny Tiatto will spend his off-season recovering from a double fracture of the jaw, instead of finding a new club.

Tiatto suffered the injury during Australia's 3-1 defeat to Turkey in Sydney on Friday night and spent the past weekend (ironically his birthday) in hospital getting his jaw rewired.

He had only been on the pitch for 10 minutes in the second half, when he was accidently struck by Socceroos goalkeeper Mark Schwarzer in the incident that led to Turkey's third goal.

The aggressive midfielder was to spend the off-season searching for a new club after being released by Manchester City and there was rumours that newly promoted West Bromwich Albion was keen to sign him.

The injury may force them to look elsewhere in what would be a huge blow for Tiatto.

Danny recently had a new acquistion to his family with the birth of baby Phoenix.

SAINTS FALL FROM GRACE

Lions and Demons record Finals wins

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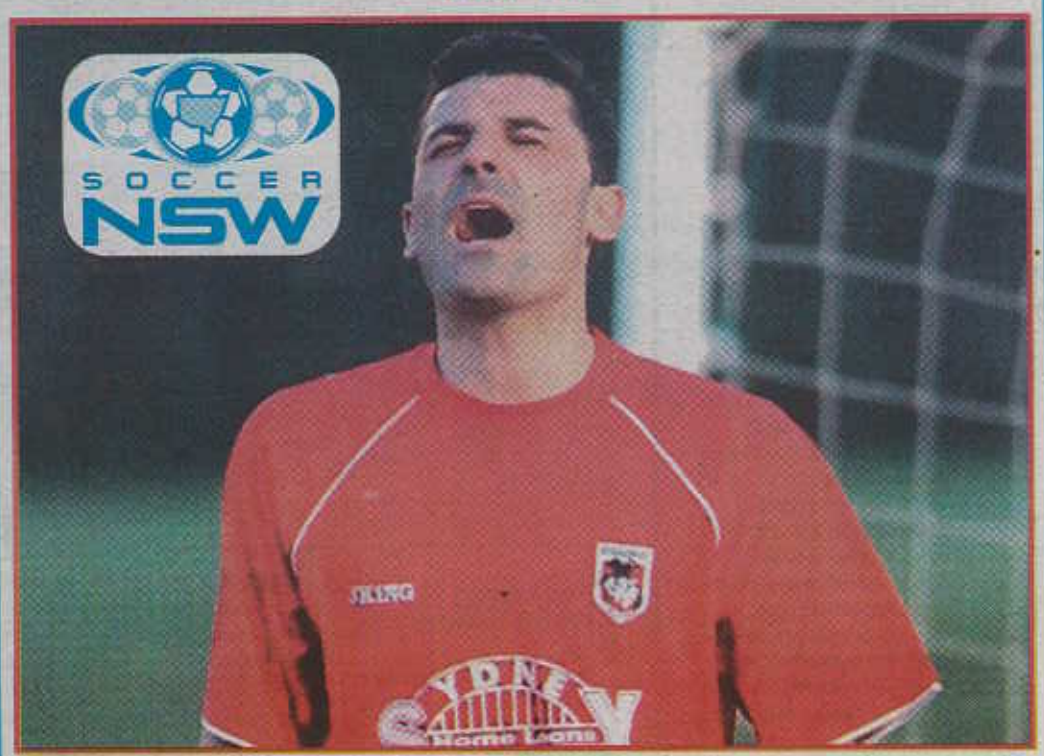

Devastated: St George veteran Bruno Beddoni sheds his anger towards the Saints quarter-final loss courtesy of the Lions last week.

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BY DANIEL KUZIOW

Socceroo Mile Sterjovski has signed a three-year deal with Swiss Champions FC Basel as from next season.

Sterjovski will join his Socceroo teammate Scott Chipperfield at the club, after four seasons with French side Lille.

Sterjovski can play either as a striker or in midfield and by joining Basel will get the chance to once again play in the Champions League.

The deal sealed by Bernie Mandic has Sterjovski now as one of Australia's most expensive players playing abroad.

★ ★ ★ ★

Simon Miotto is set to become Tasmania's first Premiership representative.

The Aussie goalkeeper signed a new, one-year deal with newly-promoted West Bromwich Albion last week and admits he is still pinching himself at how his career has developed this season.

The 34 year-old was training with a side in Milan when an unexpected call came from Baggies boss Gary Megson just before transfer deadline day.

Simon Miotto: Player agent is currently enjoying success with newly English Premier League promoted side WBA.

A former Blackpool, Hartlepool, Raith and St Johnstone keeper, Miotto told the Evening Mail: "This is what I've been waiting for throughout my career and it really does mean more to me than anything in the world.

"Make no mistake I'm here as back up to Russell (Hoult) and Joe (Murphy), who are two of the best, but I want to keep as close to them as possible.

"I am hard working, reliable and will continue to provide depth for West Brom. This has been an amazing couple of months for me. The way I have been welcomed by everyone at the club from the players, staff, coaches and supporters has made me realise how lucky I am.

"It's still a bit of a dream for me and I cannot wait to get back to pre-season training "I'm not here just for the fun of it - at the end of next season I want the club to say they were happy with me."

★ ★ ★ ★

Everton are ready to move for Rangers skipper Craig Moore.

Goodison Park boss Dave Moyes is aware the Aussie defender can leave Ibrox if the price is right. The Everton manager has made signing two defenders a priority.

The Sunday Mail says Moore is keen to have another crack at English football after an ill-fated spell at Crystal Palace six years ago.

Moore's agent John Viola is aware of the situation and several top clubs around Europe have expressed an interest.

★ ★ ★ ★

Former Leeds United goalkeeper Danny Milosevic is hopeful of joining a club next season as a first-choice.

Milosevic, now a free agent, and his wife Tania headed back to England on Saturday and to the "flooded market" he knows will not be easy to crack.

"There are times when you think 'what am I doing here?' But I've stuck at it," he told the West Australian.

"Like every other player, I'm chasing a dream.

"It has been tough but it's also been enjoyable and a good lesson in life.

"I'm just hoping now to go somewhere in Europe and settle down and get on with playing the game.

"When you play football, doors can open."

★ ★ ★ ★

Australia coach Frank Farina insists there is no hard feelings over Austria Vienna Number one Joey Didulica's decision to play for Croatia.

Geelong-born Didulica is set to make Croatia's squad for the European championships and Farina told the Daily Telegraph: "Good luck to him. He made the choice. I couldn't guarantee him anything [with the Socceroos]."

Didulica has had a great year with the Austrian club after his stint with Dutch giants Ajax.

★ ★ ★ ★

Brondby IF have handed trials to out-of-contract Marconi striker Nick Carle.

The Australia international could become the second high-profile Aussie to move to Denmark in two weeks - after Tasmanian Mary Donaldson married Crown Prince Frederik.

Carle was spotted by Brondby trainer Michael Laudrup and has a week to do enough to win a permanent deal with the Danish club, which is currently second on the league table.

Carle, known for his dazzling skills was at England First Division side Barnsley for trials but nothing eventuated from that.

★ ★ ★ ★

Middlesbrough goalkeeper Mark Schwarzer has jetted to Australia still having not signed a new contract.

Schwarzer who is skippering the Socceroos against Turkey in their two-match series in Oz stated it is causing concern at Boro as he enters the final year of his current contract.

"We've initiated talks but we're at a standstill at the moment and both parties have got to agree," he said. "It looks like I will be starting next season without agreeing a new deal.

"I've got six or seven internationals throughout the summer so I'm straight off to Australia at the end of the season, and then hopefully I'll have a holiday

"It's a very busy time coming up and at the moment I'm quite happy to leave it as it is and concentrate on the games I've got ahead of me."

Schwarzer is aware of Arsenal's interest and added, "It is obviously always flattering when you get linked with a club like Arsenal

"They are a fantastic side and to be linked with any side of that type of calibre is very flattering."

★ ★ ★ ★

Empoli midfielder Vince Grella is quite happy to have returned to international football against Turkey last Friday evening.

Vince Grella: Targeted by AC Milan and Fiorentina.

There had been doubts that Grella would make it back to Australia for the series because of relegation playoffs with Empoli.

But the little Serie A club were officially sent down to Inter Milan three-two, leaving Grella free to jet back in time for the first match in Sydney on Friday.

Grella is likely to have played his last game for Empoli, with his contract now up. AC Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti is a huge fan of the Australian.

Signs were clear that Grella's five year reign at Empoli were coming to an end after the Australian international was left on the bench in their last crucial match of the season.

AC Milan have thrown interest as has Serie B side Fiorentina.

★ ★ ★ ★

Birmingham City winger Stan Lazaridis is pleading with the club to decide whether they will hand him a new contract.

Currently being chased by Everton and Fulham, the 32-year-old has only one year left on his current deal and his agent, John Viola, revealed: "City aren't being fair to him.

"He has only one year left on his present deal and needs to know where he stands.

"They should put a contract in front of him or let him leave."

Lazaridis was troubled with an injury late during the Premiership season but according to coach Steve Bruce, 'Laza' has been an outstanding clubman for his side.

★ ★ ★ ★

Aussie fitness expert Jim Petruzzi is celebrating a championship this week after his Bury U19s won the Third Division title.

Petruzzi is part of former Manchester Unietd defender Chris Casper's coaching staff, who have all convinced

Bury's board to keep their youth setup together.

"We'll be entering the FA Youth Cup next season," Petruzzi told tribalfootball.com. "It's a fantastic achievement by the boys, we had opposition scouts telling us regularly that we could compete with the Premier League U19 teams.

"It's a massive change from the previous year and I guess the difficult thing is that we'll lose several of the boys to the seniors. But that's what it's all about, we've set a benchmark now and intend to keep moving forward."

★ ★ ★ ★

Former U17 Joeys keeper Jess Van Stratten is back in full fitness finally after recovering from a troublesome back and knee injury that sidelined the custodian for almost a year.

Currently on loan from Serie A giants Juventus to Serie B club Hellas Verona, Van Stratten has been on the books for being the starting shot-stopper for the side next season.

The Central Coast born and bred star stated that he hopes Olympic and Socceroo coach Frank Farina has not forgotten about him.

"My dream was to obviously play in the Olympics in Athens but my injury did not do my chances well. In saying that, I hope that Frank does not forget about me and how I am progressing in Italy".

With so many Australians

playing their trade in Europe, one must believe that it is quite easy to lose track on some our home-grown stars.

Van Stratten though is one that should not be forgotten.

His achievements during the

Danish great Michael Laudrup has given Nick Carle a trial spell with his club Brondby in Denmark.

'99 World Cup with the Joeys in New Zealand was the reason behind giants Juventus signing the former Northern Spirit keeper.

Van Stratten's saves kept the U17 Joeys in the hunt and finished second behind Brazil on penalties in the World Cup final – the best ever result for any Australian side in a World Cup.

★ ★ ★ ★

Australian U23's striker Brett Holman will be enduring a tough few weeks as his club (Currently on loan to Excelsior from Feyenoord) will go though the playoff stages in the Dutch second division for the right to be promoted in the Dutch Eredivise next year.

Holman has been starring for Excelsior and has been one of his club's top scorers.

Feyenoord have stressed that Holman could be joining them in the not too distant future as the former Parramatta Power striker gains more experience in the second division.

★ ★ ★ ★

Australian U20 stars: (L-R) Nick Stavroulakis, Trent McClenahan, Jay Lucas and Kristian Sarkies shown from their recent French camp

TURKISH DELIGHT ROOS

AUSTRALIA 1
TURKEY 3

By Peter Damalas

A spirited second half performance could not prevent the Socceroos from going down 3-1 to Turkey at Aussie Stadium on Friday evening.

The first home international match in three years proved to be a rather disappointing spectacle for the 28,000 plus crowd, who witnessed a first-half display which focused almost entirely on containment rather than adventure.

Turkey, for their part, did not shirk away from any challenge throughout the match, and both sides played with the kind of passion, commitment and desperation that would be fitting in an actual World Cup qualifier.

In terms of the competition, it serves as an excellent warm-up for the crunch opening World Cup qualifier against New Zealand this Saturday evening in Adelaide, although injuries to several key players have disrupted the preparation somewhat.

While Sydneysiders did not see the national team at its best, they were treated to a classy Turkish team who dominated the match in front of a largely pro-Turkish crowd, and they ran rings around the home side in the first half with their neat interchanging of short passes, distribution from defence, and incisive final balls in attack.

National coach Frank Farina opted to experiment with his midfield- adopting a 4-5-1 formation with a packed midfield and a sole striker up front, David Zdrilic.

The idea was to use the two wide-men- Brett Emerton on the right and Scott Chipperfield on the left- as well as Parma's Marco Bresciano, to support the target man. But this ploy backfired spectacularly, as the four man Turkish midfield dominated proceedings and Zdrilic was left isolated, and could hardly be reached by the inaccurate passes and crosses that came out of midfield and the flanks.

Fatigue certainly played a part in the limp performance of the Socceroos in the first half, with most of the players having just completed gruelling domestic seasons in Europe before making the long trip back home.

Given the fact that the national team have resolved to play practically all of their friendly matches in Europe, and considering the mass of red and white crescent flags in the stadium, the Socceroos looked like a team playing away from home, such was their defence minded approach.

Turkey by comparison were comfortable on the poor surface, and looked the fresher of the two sides.

The lack of attacking invention is a worrying sign at this stage at least, as the last-up win over South Africa in London was also characterised by a dour struggle.

An early effort by left midfielder Hasan Sas was an indication that the Turkish team were not treating this friendly, as a training hit-out.

The talented Galatasaray player, who has surprisingly not been snapped up by a bigger European club, constantly tormented his marker Simon Colosimo, playing out of position at right-back.

In the after-match press conference, he stated that while the Turkish players are used to the hard physical nature of football, the Australian team were "technically not as good as they could be."

The aggressive tackling of ball-winning midfielder Emre Belozoglou, of Serie A giants Inter Milan, was a feature of this match. The pocket maestro epitomised the bullish spirit of Australia's opponents.

Matters threatened to boil over at one stage when Emre clashed with Emerton, and goalkeeper Rustu Recber made matters worse when he charged fifty metres to the half-way line to shove Emerton off. All three players involved in the fracas were promptly booked by Japanese referee Toru Kamikawa, who was probably not expecting such a furious and foul-ridden encounter.

Stand-in skipper Mark Schwarzer came to the rescue as early as the eleventh minute when he stood his ground and stopped a close-range Tuncay Sanli shot from breaching the net, after Vince Grella lost his footing just inside Australia's half of the field.

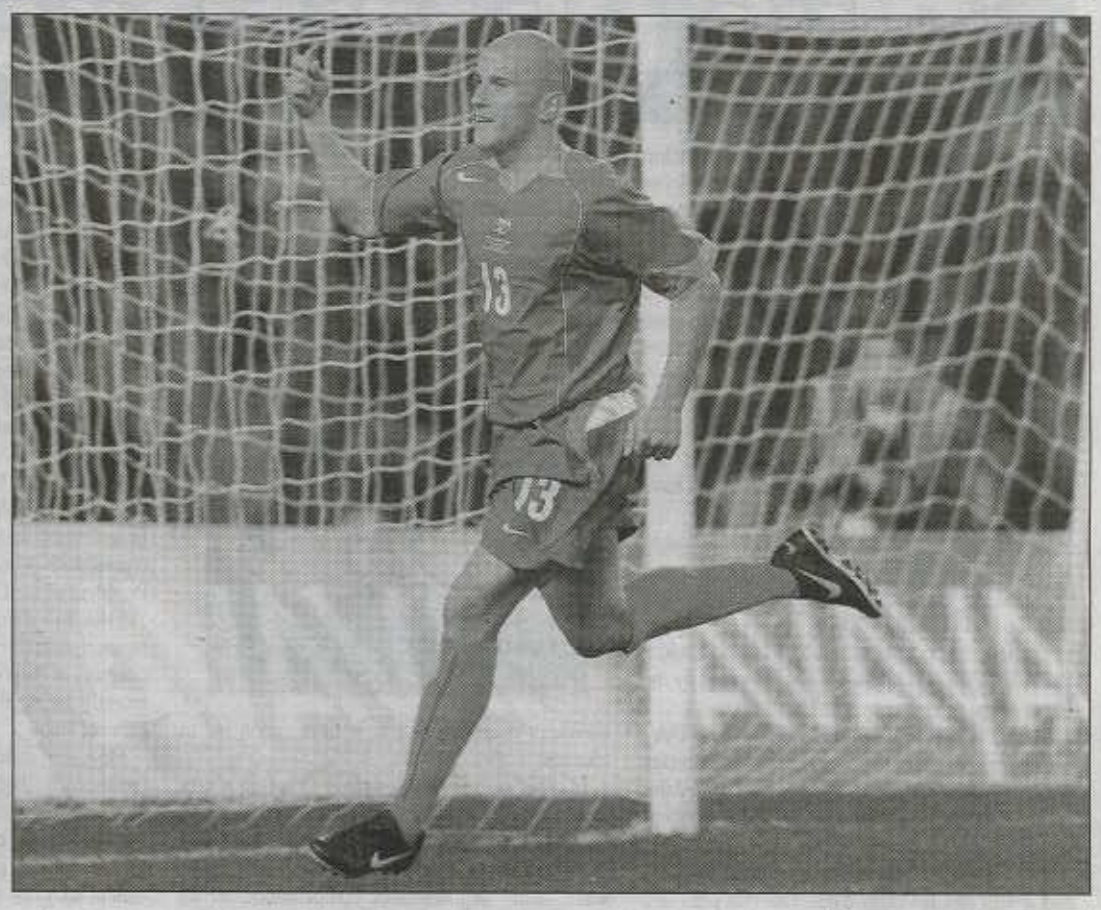
Remarkably, it took the home team 39 minutes to pose its first serious threat on Rustu's goal when Emerton skied a left-foot shot from outside the penalty area over the bar.

Three minutes later and the away team took a deserved lead.

Midfielder Umit Ozat fired in a powerful free-kick which flew past the wall and under Schwarzer,s body, who must surely take some of the blame for not preventing the goal.

Moments later however, Bresciano should have levelled the score when he was in the clear on the left. His shot sailed over the crossbar- and this was a chance that he would normally bury.

The second half arrived and signalled the much anticipated international debut of Max Vieri, younger brother of Azzurri star, Christian.



Socceroo star Marco Bresciano celebrating his spot-kick against the Turks

By Farina's own admission, the introduction of the Napoli striker changed the nature of the match as his height and physical presence meant that the midfield had another target man to aim for, and Zdrilic had someone to work off.

Bresciano made up for his miss just before half-time when he won and converted a penalty two minutes into the second period. While he was certainly fouled, the Turkish players protested the precise location of the foul, and replays suggest that it may have occurred on the edge of the penalty area.

The talented midfielder made no mistake from the spot, emphatically dispatching the ball into the top-left hand corner of the net.

Reverting back to the staple 4-4-2 formation, the Socceroos looked more comfortable and pushed forward in search of a second goal.

But a mix up at the back cost Australia dearly, and star striker Hakan Sukur, nicknamed the 'Bull of the Bosporus', capitalised.

Substitute Danny Tiatto did not enjoy a happy return to the international scene when he and Steve Laybutt conspired to let in Sas, who squared the ball to Sukur on 69 minutes.

And with fourteen minutes remaining, the journeyman left-midfielder attempted to clear a dangerous cross and instead collided with Schwarzer in an incident which left Farina with three headaches.

Not only did Sukur give Turkey an insurmountable 3-1 lead immediately after the collision, but Tiatto sustained a double fractured jaw while Schwarzer injured his hip.

For Tiatto, the injury could not have happened at a worse time as his English club Manchester City has released him from his contract and he is on the lookout for another club. He will be re-assessing his playing career during his recovery, which began in hospital on Saturday (his 31st birthday) where he had his jaw rewired.

Colosimo and Vieri came close to restoring some lost pride late in the match, the latter,s header went inches over the bar in stoppage time.

A learning curve certainly for Australia.

Farina admitted that crucial errors handed Turkey two of the three goals, but he was pleased with the second-half showing and confirmed that he would be sticking to a 4-4-2 set-up.

"We did not come to grips too well in the first half, but we did a lot better in the second half. Max Vieri made an automatic impact as he gave us a lot more go forward, and as the game progressed we got better," he said.

His Turkish counterpart stressed the importance of these two matches for his team's future prospects.

After finishing with the bronze medal at the 2002 World Cup, Turkey were surprisingly eliminated from the play-offs for Euro 2004 by tiny Latvia, and this trip is regarded as the start of preparation for the 2006 World Cup qualifiers.

Turkish coach Ersun Yanal believes his players have learned from the experience and re-affirmed the Turkish players belief in themselves.

ASA appoints Boultbee

The Australian Soccer Association last week continued its staffing by appointing former AIS chief John Boultbee to head-line the ASA's highly acclaimed performance unit.

At 54, Boultbee will work alongside a to be announced technical director to help promote young promising Australian development and oversee the performances of all junior Australian sides right through to the Socceroos.

For quite some time now, former AIS head coach Ron Smith has been linked with this job and with the appointment of a former AIS chief, should see Smith come to the forum.

If there has been anyone that could be fit for the technical directors role its Ron Smith who was one of the main instigators behind the AIS football scheme since its induction.

Smith has see a number of stars come and go and the current batch of Socceroos have been taught in some way by Ronny.

ASA chief executive John O'Neill said that the announcement of Boultbee will be one that will bear many benefits to the game.

"John brings with him a wealth of experience including spending six years running the AIS where he oversaw high performance institution training for 26 sports", he stated to the '*Daily Telegraph*'.

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FIFA unveil World Club Championship

A revamped Club World Championship with six teams will be held in Tokyo from December 2005 with £10million prize money on offer, FIFA announced last week.

Three months after announcing the bare bones of the competition, FIFA confirmed on Friday that it will take place from December 11-18 next year and that all six confederations had agreed to send their champion clubs.

The annual championship will replace the current World Club Cup which has been played between the champions of South America and Europe most years since 1960. Those games have been staged in Tokyo since 1980.

The European and South American champions will now join those from Africa, Asia, Oceania and CONCACAF in the tournament that has so far been staged once in Brazil in 2000.

The idea has been opposed by Europe's leading clubs, but their opposition may be tempered by the huge annual prize money on offer.

The new competition was ratified by FIFA's executive committee meeting in Paris on Monday after the representatives of all of FIFA's confederations agreed their champion teams would be obliged to take part in the tournament.

The format was agreed in London in February and it will last for eight days. The European and South American champions will be introduced at the semi-final stage, meaning they will play a maximum of two games.

The four other teams will meet each other in a first round knockout match to decide who qualifies for the semi-finals.

In February, the 102-strong European Club forum said it was totally opposed to the championship, but it would now seem that next season's

European champion will have little option but to take part.

In other matters, FIFA agreed to set up a task force to examine complaints lodged by the G-14 group of major European clubs with the Swiss Competitions Committee (COMCO). The G-14 wants salary and insurance compensation for its players called up for international duty.

FIFA also confirmed that next year's Confederations Cup - the warm-up tournament for the 2006 World Cup finals - would take place in Germany from June 15-29.

The Executive commitee also ratified the decision taken by the board of FIFA Marketing & TV that from 2007 the television rights to each tournament will be open to separate public tender.

Four new categories for FIFA's marketing partners were also approved: FIFA Partner; FIFA World Cup Partner; National Supporter and Global Supplier.

The status of 'observer' for the President of the Oceania Football Confederation was also confirmed until further notice, as Oceania's elected representative on the FIFA executive is not the President of the OFC.

FIFA will also tighten up the loophole on international eligibility which will be presented to its congress in Paris on Friday. Qatar tried to exploit it recently by signing up Brazilians to play for its national team.

FIFA also officially lifted the suspension of the Guatemalan football association and it praised those running soccer in war-ravaged Iraq for keeping the league championship going and for its Under-23 team reaching the Olympic Games in Athens later this summer.

SOUTH AND KNIGHTS IN VPL

Following last week's story in *ABSW*, both South Melbourne and the Melbourne Knights have been accepted by the VPL in playing in Victoria's elite competition netx year.

In recent months, the La Ionica Men's Victorian Premier League has attracted unprecedented attention from the media and the Victorian soccer public. The influx of quality players into VPL clubs has lifted the profile and quality of the league to new heights, which has resulted in one of the most competitive seasons in recent times.

The quality of competition has even attracted the eye our national selectors who are now aware of the potential available in the elite Victorian competition. The future of the Men's VPL is promising and the Victorian Soccer Federation (VSF) is pleased to announce that the 2005 Men's VPL will consist of 14 teams.

The Men's VPL will welcome South Melbourne and Melbourne Knights into the competition, which will undoubtedly rekindle the passion among Victorian soccer fans. The inclusion of two extra teams means that the 2005 season will be significantly longer, setting fans up for an explosive finals series.

The inclusion of two more clubs to the competition will not affect the current promotion and relegation process. At the moment the bottom two clubs at the end of the season are relegated to State League One while the top two clubs in State League One are promoted into the VPL. Maintaining the current system means that the competition will be fiercer than ever and the battle to stay in the VPL, will rival the battle to take the silverware.

BILL TURNER CUP and BILL TURNER TROPHY

Qualifying Round: Tamworth 3 McCarthy Catholic 1 Barraba Central 1 Quirindi 0, Leumeah 4 Holsworthy 0.

Round 1: Our Lady of Lebanon 1 Heritage College 0, St Clair 8 Cranebrook 0, Glenmore Park 5 Springwood 0, Penrith 3 John Wycliffe 2, Doonside 7 Mitchell 0, Balgowlah Boys 2 Killara 1, Endeavour Sports 5 Gymea 0, Aquinas College 4 Kirrawee 0, Robert Townson 4 Thomas Reddall 1, John Therry 5 Airds 0, East Hills Boys 3 St Marks 0, Oxley 8 Tamworth 0, Farrar Ag 4 Barraba Central 1, Wollumbin 2 Lindisfarne 1, Summerland Christian 6 Kyogle 0, Toormina 2 Coffs Harbour 1, Macksville 2 Nambucca Heads 1, John Paul College 7 Bishop Druitt 0, South Grafton 2 Maclean 1, St Clare Taree 1 GLC Tuncurry 0, Wingham 7 Buladelah Central 0, GLC Forster 3 Chatham 2, Taree 2 Camden Haven 1, St Pauls Pt Macquarie 4 St Pauls Kempsey 1, St Josephs Pt Macquarie 5 Kempsey 2, Port Macquarie 6 Wauchope 0, Scone Grammar 1-4 Muswellbrook 1-3, Maitland 4 Hunter Valley Grammar 0, St Josephs Lochinvar 3 Mount View 1, St Catherines Singleton 2 Dungog 1, Singleton 2 Scone 1, St Peters Maitland 8 Rutherford 1, CC Waratah 2 Newcastle 1, CC Wallsend 2-5 St Pius X 2-2.

GIRLS TROPHY

Qualifying Round: Coleambally Central 3 Leeton 2.

Round 1: St Spyridon College 1 Moriah College 0, Heathcote 5 Penshurst Girls 1, Thomas Redcal 4 Leumeah 1, Elderslie 2 Robert Townson 0, Kyogle 6 St Marys Casino 0, Mullumbimby 0 Ballina 1, Emmanuel Anglican 3 Cape Byron Steiner 0, Southern Cross 2 Xavier Lennox Head 1, Kingscliffe 5 St Josephs Banora Point 0, Toormina 6 Macksville 0, Bishop Druitt 2 Coffs Harbour 0, John Paul College 6 Dorrigo 0, Newcastle 3 Hunter School PA 0, Hunter Christian 3 Tomaree 2, St Josephs E Gosford 9 Gosford Christian 0, St Francis Leeton 7 Coleambally Central 0, Xavier Albury 3 Finley 0.

Round 2: All Saints Lakemba 6 Our Lady Of Lebanon 0, Emmaus Catholic 1 Penrith Anglican 0, McCarthy Catholic 7 Cranebrook 0, Clare Catholic 5 Colo 0, St Leo's College 2 Killarney Heights 1, Riverside Girls 4 Carlingford 0, Pennant Hills 5 Concord 0, Port Hacking 1-4 Woolooware 1-3, Aquinas College 3 Lucas Heights 1, Heathcote 2 Menai 1.

Grierson & the Crown Prince of Brunei

With a seventeen month off-season stretching ahead of Australia's home-based elite level footballers like a yawning chasm, it is perhaps not surprising that many of them would look towards Asia and other overseas destinations to help fill the gap.

Brisbane Strikers skipper Peter Grierson was one of the quickest out of the blocks, securing himself a contract in what must surely be one of football's last frontiers - the oil-rich Islamic nation of Brunei, on the north-east coast of the massive tropical island of Borneo.

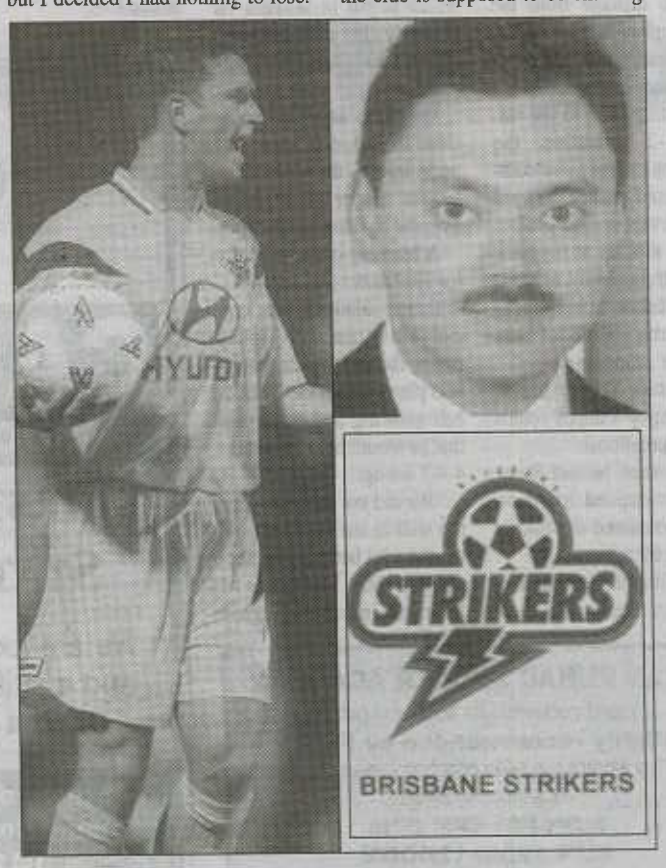
Grierson's contract is with DPMM FC, a club owned by the Crown Prince of Brunei which plays in Brunei's B-League Division 1.

But Grierson has not necessarily left the Brisbane Strikers for good. Importantly, for a player who has given five years of his career to the Brisbane club, the one-year contract he signed with DPMM has a release clause which will free him to resume his career in Australia at any time should the opportunity present itself.

But why Brunei? After all, most football supporters outside of Asia would be hard-pressed finding it on a globe, much less be aware that it has a football league. Well, as far as Grierson is concerned it represents a tremendous opportunity to add some new experiences to a varied football career that began in Liverpool, England and continued in the Channel Islands before transplanting itself to the Gold Coast and Brisbane.

"A friend of Louis Brain had a contact in Brunei and we both sent our resumes over and were offered a trial", he said on Thursday this week. "He (Brain) backed out because of his upcoming wedding, but I decided I had nothing to lose. The chance to play and live in a different country was an opportunity I didn't want to miss, knowing the circumstances back in Oz.

"The league DPMM FC plays in is the top league in Brunei. The winner of the league qualifies for the Asian Champions League (and) the club is supposed to be entering a few other international competitions during the year".



Strikers captain Peter Grierson (Left) is currently playing for the Crown Prince of Brunei's (Right) side DPMM FC.

In fact Grierson has just had his first taste of international club competition, Asian-style - playing in the Big Trumpet Cup in Singapore, where DPMM FC lost 2-1 to Singapore League leaders Woodlands Wellington FC.

Having also had a number of pre-season games with his new club, Grierson has had an opportunity to assess the standard of the B-League, which appears to be hamstrung by a lack of quality coaching for young local players.

"The standard is not so good, maybe a little bit behind the (Queensland) State League", he said. "There are no youth policies over here, so the players haven't been coached properly from an early age. They are trying to put one in place in the near future".

But while the Brunei football authorities are obviously placing some faith in youth development as a long term fix for the standard of their league, in the shorter term they are trying to boost the quality of their teams by bringing in foreign coaches and players. Grierson's club is getting in for its share.

"The coach is Amir Alagich, from Bosnia", Grierson said. "He has an Australian passport as he lived in Melbourne in the nineties, before coaching in Europe and America. The training is very hard, more so because of the tropical weather - (there's) plenty of squelching in my own sweat at training. He is well qualified and is very professional in his approach, but he has a difficult job trying to change the mentality of players that have been semi-pro for so long and turn them into pros. He is very demanding, which is difficult when some players are not quite good enough".

Grierson, who is playing as a centre back in a 4-4-2 system ("it was one of the few positions I have never played, so it is another little challenge"), is one of three foreign players the club is allowed to have on its roster. The other foreigners are Oluseye Ajayi (Nigeria) and Florin Olimpiu (Romania), who play as a striker and a centre back respectively. "Both are good guys and I socialize a lot with them", Grierson said.

Not that the "socializing" necessarily bears much resemblance to the socializing that players from non-Islamic backgrounds might be used to.

"There are no bars or nightclubs here, but I suppose pro footballers are not meant to go to them anyway", said Grierson - surely with tongue in cheek. "The locals are all Muslims and very religious and we pray before every game".

The reverential mindset of the local players also extends, it seems, to the way they view their club's royal owner, who attends matches and apparently sits on a throne near the touchline! "I've shaken his hand a couple of times but I haven't actually spoken to him, but all the local boys worship him", Grierson said.

MILICIC MAULING MALAYSIA

By Mark Stavroulakis

Its to no-one's surprise that former Parramatta Power striker Ante Milicic is quickly grabbing the head-lines in Malaysia's Super League with club side Pahang.

After being awarded the prestigious prize of the NSL's Player of the Year, Milicic has managed to score four goals in as many matches for his new side.

Pahang's coaching staff and fans have been delighted with Ante's success and how the star striker has adapted to the Malaysian life.

The management expressed Ante's call-up to the Socceroos in a big way and were happy to see the striker benefit this from his so far short Malaysian stint.

One honour Milicic was happy with was the fact that Socceroo coach Frank Farina did not forget him and included Ante into the current Socceroos squad.

It was quite rare that an Australian based in Asia had the chance to make the Socceroo squad but Milicic changed that trend.

His goals in Malaysia were enough for Farina to give the green light for the 30-year-old who still has a good three or four years left in the football world.

It is fair to say that in terms of the attackers, the Roos were left in the lurch after a few withdrawals in John Aloisi, Mark Viduka and Harry Kewell to name a few.

Ante hope's that with good performances for the their friendly matches with Turkey and the OFC Cup along with his consistent play at Pahang could herald him a permanent spot for the green and gold.

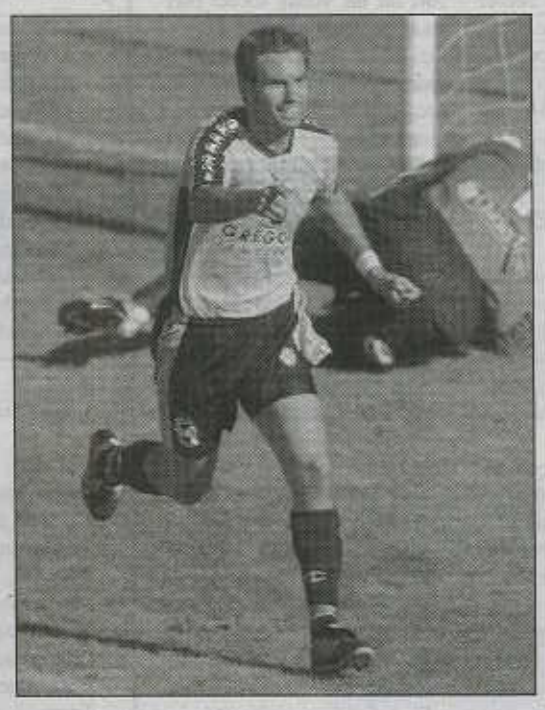
"My target now is to just train and play as well as I can. Its up to Frank to decide which strikers he goes with and how much game time he gives each player, I can only do the best I can and see if its good enough", Ante stated to the Sydney Morning Herald.

One aspect the striker has been quite fortunate with has been the fact that he has enjoyed his football career so far and has stated that he has had no regrets in his journey to the top.

"I've been happy with my career. Obviously I could have had a lot more caps, but don't forget as a striker you're up against Kewell and Viduka – probably in other position you don't have such fierce competition. You've got to be realistic," he explained.

"I don't have any regrets. Maybe I didn't have the luck when I needed it. But I'm not really thinking about what happened in the past. If I can get a few games in the green and gold, hopefully I'll make the most of it and we'll see what happens."

Having scored well over 60 goals in the past three years, Milicic has surely hit form in the goal-scoring department.



Meet the Pahang Predator: Ante Milicic

His overseas spells in Holland with NAC Breda and having spent some time in his native country of Croatia, Ante has managed to gain a wealth of experience from different domestic competitions from across Europe.

"I believe my form over the last few years gas warranted selection, so it was not a total shock to be picked for the Roos. But its always great news," he added to *SMH*.

Pahang have certainly benefited from the signing of the Australian striker who has really sent out a stern message to any other Australian wishing to play abroad at his versatile age.

The saying 'your never too old for anything', comes to mind with Milicic pushing the boundaries of stating that age is just a number.

Financially, this was to be Ante's best move by far leaving the shores of Australia for Malaysia.

The former Power striker was first to jet off after the Australian league was to commence again next August which in his mind and as well as many others was far too long.

While the meter was hot, Milicic packed his bags and departed Australia but it was to be the right move.

Had he stayed here playing in the lower NSW leagues like many former NSL stars have, then maybe this green and gold call-up was not to be.

Fortunately for 'Tezza', it worked out well and the striker is now benefiting from his success in Australia.

Here's a new nickname for Ante: The Pahang 'Predator'.

CYPRUS CALLING FOR YOUNG AUSSIE

By Mark Stavroulakis

Its not often we hear of many Australians venturing off to the serene country of Cyprus for their football, but one such youngster has done just that.

17-year-old Sydney born Andrew Lazarou had packed his bags a year and a half ago and signed a professional contract with APOEL (Cyprus' biggest and best club in Division One).

Having signed a four-year deal with the Cypriot club, the former NSWIS graduate has been playing regularly with the squad's second team but training with the first.

"Its been a great experience so far for me here in Cyprus, everything is so professional, its something many footballers here hope to achieve very soon. Training with the first team has been a brilliant experience for me as we have a number of quality players in the squad. I know Cypriot football is not well known here but its quite a physical and tactical league and its certainly no push-over if that's what people are thinking".

Lazarou's dream started when he ventured to his father (George), native country of Cyprus in search of a professional contract.

"To be honest I did not think I would have gained the attention of the best club in Cyprus but it happened. I played well during my trial period there and the coaching staff liked what they saw and snapped me up. It was a dream come true but there is still a lot of work to be done".

The left-wing back has had a number of stories to tell since his time in Cyprus, one being when he was selected for trails with the U19 Cypriot National team.

"Playing regularly for the best side in Cyprus at reserve level was eye catching for the selectors. Unfortunately I did not make the final squad but I was delighted to have been given such an opportunity that I know would not have been given to me in Australia".

One obstacle that young Lazarou had to endure was getting through military service. One aspect that many Australians face when playing in a country of their parents birth that have compulsory military service.

Andrew Lazarou causing a stir with Cypriot club APOEL.

"It was something that I wanted to avoid as I came to Cyprus purely for football. Luckily for me, I was christened in a Catholic church and by law in Cyprus you have to be christened in an Orthodox church to eligible to go the army. Thankfully I avoided this".

At this stage in his career Lazarou will be flying back to Cyprus for pre-season training in a month and the youngster is hoping to get a sniff in the first team.

"At this stage I will be doing all that I can to gain some time in the first team. Its quite hard as I am at a side that has Cypriot internationals along with some Greek stars as well. I just want to get as much experience possible, play as many reserves games as possible then hope to move further up the ladder of development".

Finally, something that has crippled the development of youngsters in this country has been the lack of a first team competition.

With the APL starting next August, many of Australia's youngsters have been subject to playing in the lower leagues of their respective state competitions from across the nation.

Lazarou said that he was fortunate enough to have left the Australian shores at the right time.

"At the moment it is quite hard playing in Australia as there is no main league that youngsters can strive to play for. Most of my friends are currently at clubs in the lower leagues in NSW and I know many of them would love to be playing abroad.

That is why I want to do the best that I can to stay in Europe. I am hoping though that the APL does pick up for the sake of the game in Australia".

HARRY MICHAELS OLYMPIC BOUND?

Zero1Zero head honcho Harry Michaels has thrown his hat in the ring for becoming Sydney Olympic's next new President.

The club is currently going through a transitional period with a number of Annual General Meetings having taken place in order of helping out the club's future.

Its no secret that Olympic will still be a football force in Australia but will locate itself in the newly proposed NSW Premier League that will kick-start at the end of the season.

At the moment, a 16-team NSW competition is still under heavy consideration by SOCCER NSW's members, but Olympic officials believe that they will take part in a revamped local league.

The new APL was far too much of budget for the club to play in thus choosing the state league instead.

Michaels has stated that if elected as President of the club then many new facets will fall into place at the once glamour club.

A club house will be built, also bringing back its tradition from grass roots levels and helping the squad out through his media company are all actions Michaels wishes to push through.

Known as a respected businessman, its up to the Olympic members to decide but he will be tackling a few influential characters in the Olympic set-up, one being patriotic businessman Jim Augerinos who, from close sources, seems to be the favourite to lead the club.

Another scenario involving The Greek Orthodox Community of NSW and Olympic joining forces could also come to fruition.

Sydney Olympic's next new President – Harry Michaels?

ABSW will keep its readers informed on the Olympic situation.

MAX WANTS CHRISTIAN

By Mark Stavroulakis

Brotherly love is surely in the air after Socceroo's new star Max Vieri has issued a warning to brother Christian, he wants to play against him in the next World Cup.

Max, currently in Australia for the Socceroos friendly clashes against Turkey and the up and coming OFC Nations Cup, wants to fulfil his dream of playing the Inter Milan striker.

Currently attacking for Serie B side Napoli, its been a rather tough seen for Max who has been in a side that has struggled from the start of their Italian campaign.

Once known as a glamour club to all European spectators from across the globe with the infamous Maradona, Napoli has had a fall from grace these past few years.

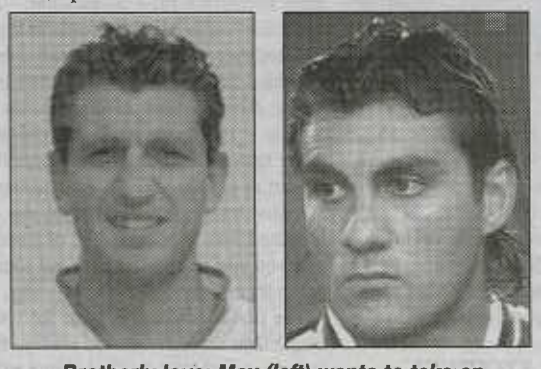
After the club's demise from the Serie A, it's been one tough road in getting back to the pinnacle of Italian football.

Vieri has been a constant thorn in Napoli's attack and has scored some valuable goals for the club who have 3 matches remaining in the Serie B.

Having taken Australian citizenship two months ago, Max, apart from his distinct Italian accent, want's to stake a claim as being the nations top ace striker.

Born and raised in Sydney, it's been a tough struggle for Vieri who has yet to live up to his brother's huge expectations.

Being under the Juventus umbrella for ten years, during his time with the Serie A giants, Max has been loaned out to three different Serie B clubs. Competition has always been fierce in the Vieri household but Max admitted that he was not one bit jealous of Christian.



Brotherly love: Max (left) wants to take on Christian in the next World Cup for the Socceroos.

"I'm happy to be his brother. He's like a second father to me. He tells me what to do and how to train. Now I would just like to play for Australia against him in a World Cup, I think that would be a beautiful thing", Vieri stated to the 'Herald Sun'.

A name that has been synonymous with achieving greatness, the Vieri surname is surely looping towards a new scenario and environment.

Christian has conquered the national team of Italy and many glamour clubs such as Juventus, Atletico Madrid and Inter to name a few.

Its Max's turn to wow crowds but in another destination; Australia, where he could be our next best star.

WOLLONGONG NEWS

By Otto Bader

Illawarra Juniors Enter Worldwide Soccer — Next month a local U/16's junior soccer team travels to Denmark and Sweden to participate in the GOTHIA Cup, the world's largest youth tournament with entries closed at 1520 teams.

FIFA has approved this event started in 1975 with just 275 sides in Gothenberg, Sweden. 120 countries have been represented and over 500,000 persons have participated.

For the fans to learn more about this world wide sports event click on website www.gothiacup.com and details are revealed about this mind blowing event.

Shellharbour's secretary Benita Jovanovski has received official sanction from the Australian Soccer Association and the letter also went, rather late, to the Illawarra Junior Soccer Association which hopefully supports the overseas trip and can be proud of the home-grown soccer boys representing Illawarra Socer. Soccer Australia wishes the party every success and a safe tour.

Shellharbour organisers coach Peter Tersiovski, Bob Kezovski and Neil Greig are thankful for the many business and other supporters.

This is the second youth team from the South Coast to travel overseas this year and all soccer fans can feel proud of the enterprise shown by the juniors and excellent conduct.

This year the GOTHIA cup committee has accepted teams from 61 countries like Albania, Argentina, Australia going through the alphabet to Zambia under the last letter.

The biggest countries outside Sweden with teams come from the USA, Germany, England and Norway. First time countries participating are this year Azerbaijan, Palestine, Pakistan and Tunisia.

There is hardly any other team sport to assemble such variety in nations in one football tournament, most likely the biggest junior soccer fixture globally.

In total 4320 games are scheduled over 6 days in the Swedish city of Gothenberg. Television broadcast goes to 11 nations exposing the young players to the world of football and many large clubs are sending scouts to spot outstanding players.

Games are played in Gothenberg on 91 fields. The city is looking for millions of tourist visitors and dollars spend with accommodation booked well in excess for 295,000 so far.

If no financial assitance is given at least express moral support for the young soccer players. One could imagine some of the more promoted football codes would prominently advertise a trip like that plus support it financially in a big way.

Our local politicians from councils and State Government officials surely will benefit from spreading the name of Wollongong and Shellharbour overseas as sole representative side taking part in such international sports event.

The opportunity was wasted when the young Wolves travelled to France in April and valuable connections were made in Saint Etienne with local dignitaries.

Midweek Cup Quarter Finals — On Tuesday and Wednesday night last week in the quarter finals of the youth and Bert Bampton cup the results were:

First Grade saw Dapto winning 2:0 against University and Bulli surprisingly beating Coniston Lions 2:1, the semi finals are now Cringila v Port Kembla and Dapto v Bulli same nights kick-off 7.45 PM

VICTORIAN PREMIER LEAGUE 2003-04

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
1.BulleenZebrasSC	14	9	3	2	21	11	30
2.PrestonLionsSC	14	9	2	3	21	10	29
3.FrankstonPinesSC	14	9	1	4	17	9	28
4.AltonaMagicSC	14	8	2	4	22	20	26
5.GreenGullyCavaliersSC	13	7	3	3	20	13	24
6.StAlbansSaintsSC	14	7	2	5	18	12	23
7.OakleighCannonsSC	14	7	2	5	18	14	23
8.EssendonRoyalsSC	14	6	3	5	19	15	21
9.WhittleseaStallionsSC	13	2	4	7	22	23	10
10.FawknerBluesSC	14	2	2	10	13	22	8
11.BentleighGreensSC	14	2	1	11	8	28	7
12.KnoxCitySC	14	2	1	11	10	32	7

Round 14 Results

Oakleigh Cannons .0 — Bulleen Zebras .....1 (Kakos)

Altona Magic .....5 (Delev 2, Mladenovic, Bozinovski, Becvinovski) — Knox City 0

Frankston Pines ...1 (Nicholes) — St Albans 0

Bentleigh Greens ..2 (Papadopoulos Constantinou) — Essendon Royals ....1 (S Pir)

Fawkner Blues ....1 (Ferrante) — Preston Lions .....2 (Sekulovski, Sapazovski)

Round 15 Fixtures

Sat, 29 May,3PM

Knox City ..... vs. Whittlesea Stallions

Sun, 30 May, 3:30PM

St Albans Saints .... vs. Altona Magic

Essendon Royals ... vs. Frankston Pines

Preston Lions ..... vs. Oakleigh Cannons

Sun, 30 May, 6:00PM

Green Gully ..... vs. Fawkner Blues

Mon, 31 May, 8:15PM

Bulleen Zebras ..... vs. Bentleigh Greens

Ray Sekulovski shone out as one of Presto Lions main players in their two-one win over the Fawkner Blues

SOCCERWOMAN

BY JANENE MAR

SALISBURY PLAYS IN VICTORIOUS FIFA WORLD STARS TEAM

The FIFA Women's World Stars, including Qantas Matildas captain Cheryl Salisbury, emerged 3-2 victors over world champions Germany at the FIFA Centennial celebrations in Paris on Thursday night.

In an enthralling and entertaining showcase of women's football, the FIFA World Stars went in at half-time a goal behind, but came up with the goods in the second half to claim the win.

Australian defender Salisbury was a member of the starting eleven for the commemorative match at the Stade de France, coming off at half-time in a game where all seventeen FIFA players got a run.

The crowd was treated to plenty of top class play, goalmouth action, and goals from both sides. The World team took the lead on the quarter-hour mark through Sweden's Malin Mostrom, before Germany equalised 12 minutes later through FIFA World Player of the Year Birgit Prinz. Germany then went ahead a minute before the break with Kerstin Garefrekes' strike.

Swedish striker Victoria Svensson produced the leveller for the FIFA team three minutes into the second half. What then proved to be the winning goal was scored in the 71st minute by Nigerian Mercy Akide.

The consensus all-round by everyone involved in the occasion was that women's football was the real winner.

FIFA Women's World Stars 3 (Malin Mostrom 15', Victoria Svensson 48', Mercy Akide 71') defeated Germany 2 (Birgit Prinz 27', Kirstin Garefrekes 44')

FIFA Women's World Stars : Jonsson (Sulemana 12'), Wang (Diacre 46'), El Hawat (Akide 55'), Salisbury (Pichon 46'), Hooper, Marta (Steinegger 75'), Boxx (c), Mugneret-Beghe, Mostrom (Laouadi 86'), Wambach, Svensson.

Germany : Rottenberg (Angerer 64'), Stegemann, Minnert, Fuss (Pohlers 64'), Hingst (Muller 64'), Wunderlich (Gunther 46'), Garefrekes, Wiegmann (c), Odebrecht (Zerbe 46'), Meinert, Prinz.

"IT'LL BE REALLY EXCITING"

Qantas Matildas captain Cheryl Salisbury left the National Squad Training Camp a day early on Monday last week, but with very good reason. Salisbury jetted off to Paris to take her place in the FIFA Women's World Stars Team, in preparation for their game against world champions Germany, the match being a feature attraction of the FIFA Centennial celebrations.

The 30-year-old defender has enjoyed a most impressive international career since first selected for Australia a decade ago. Salisbury is the only Australian to have played in every senior women's FIFA event in which Australia has competed – the 1995, 1999, and 2003 FIFA Women's World Cup, and the 2000 Olympic Games. She is also Australia's all-time top female goalscorer (28 goals), and second highest-capped female with 93 A-international appearances. On the club scene, Salisbury has also played professionally in the Japanese L-League and the WUSA in America.

Yet despite her illustrious record, the thrill of playing for the FIFA World Stars on such a glittering occasion is no less special.

"I just want to go out and play," Salisbury said on the eve of the big match. "There's no nerves right now, and there hasn't been in the past with World Cups and Olympics. You work so hard to get there, I don't tend to get nervous, whether it's training at home, club, or internationals. The thing with this game though is it's a bit more exciting."

"I think it'll be really exciting. It's just such a huge event this FIFA Centennial. There'll be so many FIFA officials and people in high places all at this one event, which is extremely rare."

Added Salisbury of her selection in the team, "It has a different sort of significance, it's hard to explain. It's more of an individual achievement rather than a team thing where normally you work to be part of a team. FIFA's recognising these players as individuals. All throughout my career, I play because I love to play, and all of a sudden, someone tells you you've excelled. It's not something you set out to try and do."

The first to arrive in France, Salisbury had a little longer than her teammates to soak up the atmosphere in Paris, where the women's match will be played as a doubleheader with the men's Brazil versus France game at the Stade de France.

FIFA has assembled a world women's team before, but this is certainly the grandest stage on which they have had the opportunity to take the spotlight.

FIFA Women's World Stars –

Goalkeepers – Caroline Jonsson (SWE), Memunatu Sulemana (GHA).

Defenders – Cheryl Salisbury (AUS), Corinne Diacre (FRA), Charmaine Hooper (CAN), Wang Liping (CHN), Marwa Ibrahim El Hawat (EGY).

Midfielders – Shannon Boxx (USA), Marta (BRA), Malin Mostrom (SWE), Stephanie Mugneret-Beghe (FRA), Naima Laouadi (ALG), Prisca Steinegger (SUI).

Strikers – Victoria Svensson (SWE), Marinette Pichon (FRA), Mercy Akide (NGA), Abby Wambach (USA).

Coaches – Marika Domanski-Lyfors (SWE), Elisabeth Loisel (FRA).

(Homare Sawa (JPN) and Daniela (BRA) withdrew through injury, and Steinegger was brought in.)

Germany –

Goalkeepers – Nadine Angerer, Silke Rottenberg.

Defenders – Sonja Fuss, Sarah Gunther, Ariane Hingst, Sandra Minnert, Kerstin Stegemann, Christina Zerbe.

Midfielders – Kerstin Garefrekes, Steffi Jones, Viola Odebrecht, Sandra Smisek, Bettina Wiegmann, Pia Wunderlich.

Strikers – Isabell Bachor, Maren Meinert, Martina Muller, Conny Pohlers, Birgit Prinz.

Coach – Tina Theune-Meyer

BOLIVIA, ECUADOR, & PARAGUAY THROUGH TO U19 QUALIFIERS FINALS

Bolivia, Ecuador, and Paraguay advance to the finals stage of the inaugural South American Women's U19 Qualifiers after each winning their three-team groups last week. All three nations won both their group matches.

They now join favourites and hosts Brazil in the finals tournament in Rio de Janeiro, 25-29 May. The eventual champion will claim CONMEBOL's single berth to this year's FIFA U19 Women's World Championship.

An amazing crowd of 33,000 fans turned out in Sucre, Bolivia to witness the hosts easily account for Peru 5-0 and win Group B. Argentina, surprisingly to many, finished bottom of Group A, after they made their debut at the senior Women's World Cup last year.

Results –

11 May
Paraguay 5 Uruguay 1 Gp A Encarnaci PAR

11 May
Bolivia 9 Chile 1 Gp B Sucre BOL

11 May
Venezuela 0 Ecuador 4 Gp C Caracas VEN

13 May
Uruguay 1 Argentina 0 Gp A Encarnaci PAR

13 May
Chile 0 Peru 5 Gp B Sucre BOL

13 May
Ecuador 2 Colombia 1 Gp C Caracas VEN

15 May
Argentina 1 Paraguay 2 Gp A Encarnaci PAR

15 May
Peru 0 Bolivia 5 Gp B Sucre BOL

15 May
Colombia 3 Venezuela 0 Gp C Caracas VEN

DRAW CONDUCTED FOR UEFA U19s FINALS

The draw for the eight-team finals tournament of the UEFA European Women's U19 Championship was held in Helsinki, Finland on Tuesday. The tournament will decide Europe's four teams to compete in this year's FIFA U19 Women's World Championship.

Reigning European champions France and runners-up Norway have been drawn together in Group B of the event to be held in Finland, 28 July to 8 August 2004.

Group A : Finland, Germany, Spain, Switzerland.
Group B : Norway, France, Italy, Russia.

Football to be played at Athens 2004?

Anti-doping chief Dick Pound met with FIFA president Sepp Blatter and said he was confident the world soccer body would finally sign the anti-doping code allowing soccer to take part in the Athens Olympics.

"Yes I met Mr Blatter on Tuesday and the talks were fruitful and friendly," the Canadian head of the World Anti Doping Agency told Reuters by telephone from his Paris hotel.

"I'm optimistic about the resolution of the issue. I'm confident FIFA will sign the anti-doping code before the end of the week," Mr Pound added.

A meeting to settle the issue is scheduled between Mr Pound, Mr Blatter and IOC chief Jacques Rogge on Friday at FIFA's Centenary Congress in Paris.

Mr Blatter said on Monday that FIFA would not sign up to the WADA anti-doping code, a move that would exclude soccer from the Games, because it is unhappy WADA is insisting on the right to appeal against any FIFA ban imposed for a doping offence.

If that fails to happen, soccer's place in the summer Olympics is in jeopardy.

However, Mr Blatter did say on Monday: "I cannot imagine that football will not be part of the Olympic Games in Athens this summer."

The Heraklion stadium situated in Crete is a venue that will be used for one of the groups in the football category.

Australia will have the Olyroos as their representatives come August.

Its no secret that coach Frank Farina and his squad have a good chance of winning a medal in Athens but hope that an agreement is reached so this dream could hopefully be realised.

Boosted by some of the best Under 23 players yet and three over-age stars, Farina will be spoilt with players who already have commenced training for the Olympic Games.

Close sources though have stated that the Football games will carry on in Athens as like Blatter stated, the Olympics are nothing without the round ball game as soccer is a world sport.

Emerton one happy Socceroo

Of all the Australians playing their trade overseas, there are few more prominent than former Olyroo captain Brett Emerton, who is at the tail end of an indifferent debut season in England's top flight.

Emerton plays his trade with 1995 League winners Blackburn Rovers, who, with one match remaining, will have to be contented with a disappointing mid-table finish in 2004.

Although, it has not been a year of regret for Emerton himself.

Despite finishing the season on the Rover's reserves bench, the speedy flanker has thoroughly enjoyed his first taste of the English Premier League.

"It's been pretty much what I thought it would be, every game is tough," said Emerton, ahead of Blackburn's final match of the season, to Stan Lazaridis' Birmingham City.

"We've been quite unlucky this season and we should have won a lot more games than we did.

"Hopefully, with the addition of a few new players and the ones who were injured this year we'll do a lot better."

Emerton has impressed many onlookers with his pacy and precise game on the right wing, having moved to the North-West Lancashire club from Dutch giants Feyenoord Rotterdam in the off-season.

Having dreamt of a move to the English Premier League since his tender years, Emerton is thankful for the opportunity handed to him by manager Graham Souness and is contented to remain with Blackburn for some time to come.

"I think I've learnt a lot this season and I can only become a better player for it," said Emerton.

"Everybody expected us to be in that top six or top eight, but it's been a tough year and all in all I'm still enjoying it here at Blackburn."

Emerton has been a vital cog in the Socceroos machine recently and is excited at the prospect of putting on a good showing for Australia's sporting public.

"It's a good opportunity for the national team to get back together and play in front of a home crowd again," said Emerton.

After scoring in 2003's historic 3-1 win over England at Upton Park, Emerton has been present for subsequent friendlies against the Republic of Ireland and South Africa and values the meaning of such games quite highly.

"I think it's (the result) hugely important," said Emerton.

"If we come up with good results against a nation such as Turkey, that will entice other nations to want to play us.

"So, I think it's important to put in a good performance.

In the absence of colossal duo Harry Kewell and Mark Viduka, Emerton is more than capable of assuming the role as the Socceroos glamour player and is looking forward to seeing a depleted Australian side rise to the occasion.

"Obviously we'd like them to be involved, they only strengthen our team," said Emerton in reference to the Socceroos star pairing.

Proud to wear the Green and Gold: Brett Emerton looking for more success with both the Socceroos and English club side Blackburn.

"If, for whatever reasons they can't make it, we have to accept that and do the best with the squad that we've got."

"Everyone knows what's required and it's going to be a tough task again,"

"Hopefully we can all stick together and come up with the goods this time." said Emerton, with one eye looking towards Germany.

Its believed that Emerton could well be one of the over-age players who could represent the Olyroos at the Olympic Games in Athens.

Solomon Islands book ticket to Adelaide

The Solomon Islands' comprehensive 2-0 shutout over Melanesian neighbours New Caledonia in round 3 action last weekend secured the Group 1 hosts their third consecutive win and a guaranteed berth in the Stage 2 OFC Nations Cup/FIFA World Cup preliminaries in Adelaide, Australia from 29 May - 6 June 2004.

Buoyed on by some tremendous crowds since the opening match on 10 May, the local side have risen to the occasion each time to become the first OFC qualifier for Stage 2.

The resurgence of the yellow and blues has been a revelation in a little under three months with the introduction of new coach Alan Gillett of England, and the combination of freakish talents such as Henry Fa'Arodo and youngster Alick Maemae with seasoned campaigners Batram Suri and Commins Menapi.

In front of a record crowd of well over 20,000 at the magnificent Lawson Tama Stadium in Honiara, the Solomon Islanders quickly opened up a 2-0 advantage at the break.

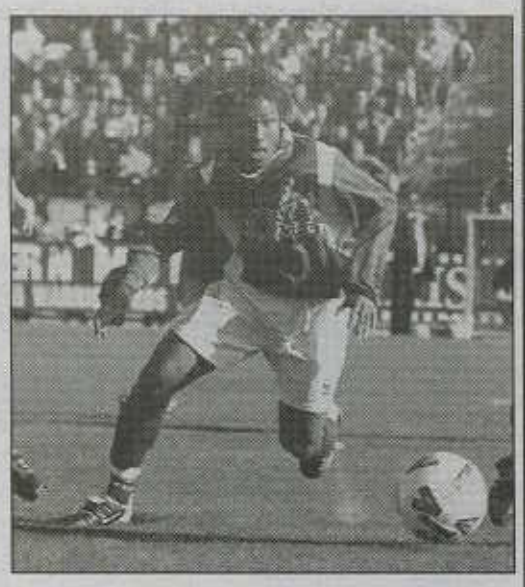
But the tough New Caledonians, runners-up in last year's South Pacific Games, were able to sustain the multi-pronged attack of the Solomons to hold them scoreless in the second half.

The vocal supporters were in full voice and brought scenes of joy that Honiara has never witnessed before.

"We have waited a long time for international football to return to our islands and what we witnessed today was a piece of history which has proven the Solomon Islanders are true lovers of the beautiful game," said emotional Solomon Islands Football Federation CEO, Matthew Kausimae.

"It is something we have never seen before; we had to close the gates because we could not fit in any more people. You could not see a blade of grass on the embankments – it was unbelievable."

Gideon Omokirio and New Zealand based defender George Suri scored the goals for the Solomons taking the scoring load of their potent forwards who were heavily marked by the New Caledonians.



Henry Fa'Arodo will be relishing the chance to score against the Socceroos in Adelaide.

SOUTH BACKED BY VSF

Debt-ridden South Melbourne has received a boost with the Victorian Soccer Federation (VSF) sticking by the club in its hour of need.

The VSF would like to make its base at South's Bob Jane Stadium but not at the expense of Victoria's most successful club.

"We are not in the business of shafting clubs," VSF chairman Manny Galanos told the *Herald Sun*.

"We would love to get Bob Jane Stadium as the headquarters for our new (Australian Premier League) team, but we want to do it the right way and our idea is to be sharing it with South Melbourne."

"We support South Melbourne's survival and want to see them coming out of problems."

The VSF is among 117 creditors owed a total of $1,502,036.11 by South. A federation representative will be present at the meeting with the club's administrator, CJL Partners.

The possible options are the liquidation of South's assets or paying approximately 15c in the dollar for the majority of creditors.

The Australian Taxation Office is owed $505,915 while the State Revenue Office of Victoria is looking to recoup $283,000.

If they can't come to terms with the administrator it could be the end of South Melbourne.

Popovic puts Socceroos on hold

Australian defender Tony Popovic last week helped Crystal Palace into the first division playoff final, but he will miss the start of the Oceania World Cup qualifiers.

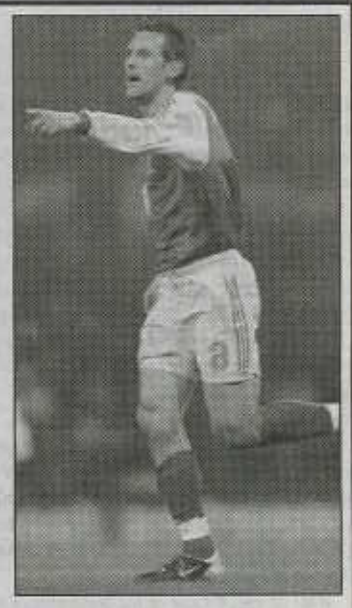
Popovic was one of five players to score as Palace beat Sunderland 5-4 in a penalty shootout after the two-leg aggregate score was tied at 4-4.

Palace's win booked them a place in the playoff final on May 29 with the winner going through to next year's luxurious English Premier League.

Popovic has been one of Frank Farina's main defenders and will be sorely missed at the heart of the Roos defence.

Already plans have been made out to replace Popovic with youthful stars Patrick Kisnorbo and Adrian Madeschi gaining selection for Farina's squad in both the Turkish friendlies and the OFC Nations Cup.

The Socceroos' cup qualifiers start on May 29.



Tony Popovic

A True Stallion

An interview with Berti Mariani

By Troy Van Dyk

For those of you who have been perennial fans of the NSL you should know who Berti Mariani is. One of the mainstays of the Marconi side that disappointingly finished second twice in the 70's. Later he became the first coach to take a side to three consecutive NSL grand final appearances, with an outstanding record of 189 NSL games coaches with 89 won he is now trying to get the club he loves so much into the new National League.

TD: How did you originally get started in the sport?

BM: I started out at five years old. Where we lived there was a park across the road. One of the boys in the street I knew asked me to play for Fairfield sports, at Fairfield Park and I've been playing ever since.

TD: As a player, you were apart of the Marconi team that in 1977 lost the title on goal difference as well as the knock-out cup final in the same year 5-3 on penalties, then in 1978 Marconi once again lost the title after eight consecutive defeats at the end of the season. After all these near misses was it, a relief to finally win some deserved silverware in 1979 and 1980?

BM: Obviously whenever you win, it is very good and very rewarding. The last season contesting at such a high standard, that 79 was very rewarding and under a different coach and as you mentioned it was very rewarding and justifiable as Marconi had been contesting for the last three seasons.

TD: Who was the best Marconi player you had the honour of playing with?

BM: I've played with quite a number. I've been quite fortunate to play with a number of great players. With his creative abilities at his age, he was easily a world-class player, the best-imported player Robbie Vieri. Locally based for his ball control and dedication Peter Sharne would have to top my bill. Closely followed by about ten other players such as Ray Richards, Eddie Krncevic and Tony Henderson.

TD: What was it like to win two NSL grand finals, which were also consequently Sydney derbies?

BM: They were actually very different. The first one was a blur as it was my first year as coach and manager. It was the second year that was more conscious, we had a little more time because we finished champions and played only one game to go to the grand final and had to wait for our opponent. In 88, we came from the last position — the sudden death position.

TD: Do you consider your appearance in three consecutive NSL grand finals a true measure of your success or do you see other issues as being a scale of achievement in your professional career?

BM: Combination of both and I can't disregard the coaching staff, playing staff and other issues regarding my professional coaching career. It is silverware but other gratification is the development of young players. I have been quite fortunate to do have some outstanding young junior players to be part of our teams.

TD: How does it feel that you have coached players that have gone to undertake successful international playing and coaching careers such as Mark Schwarzer (Middlesbrough) and Frank Farina (Coach of Australia)?

BM: To me, it's one of the highlights of a coach's career to have some involvement in their careers.

TD: In some instances, you have had to support a player who is disliked by a particular set of fans — such as when you supported Elias Augerinos, which led to some Sydney Olympic fans crudely burning a message into the Sydney Olympic field that read, "Sack Elias #3- Berti sucks". How does a coach deal with such criticism?

BM: That type of criticism is quite easy to deal with because it is irrational which means it becomes personal and highly emotional. Players of all types need support; they need the coach to help them become better players. Though obviously there is the media that plays up those dramatic but after that it doesn't matter.

TD: You yourself have dealt with FIFA at their most troublesome when they tried to downsize a France-Australia match in 2001 by enforcing player restrictions. Do you see FIFA a problem for Australian football in general?

BM: FIFA is a big family and it has been given a substantial participant base, as it is bigger than the UN. FIFA itself has demonstrated it is quite a successful organisation to deal with the running of the sport. The problem with the French match was it was rather the high-level professional European clubs and it is this area and its conflict with the international programme that will be a major test for football in the coming years.

TD: A career low for you was when you lasted in a coaching position less than a full season at Wollongong Wolves. What problems did you encounter at the Wolves that you did not at Marconi?

BM: The playing staff was not at the same level. That did not justify their situation at the time. Clubs are pretty much the same wherever you go. In hindsight, I probably attempted to play a style of attacking of football to soon in the team's development.

TD: What did you think of Marconi's run to the NSL final's series; do you believe they could have gone further?

BM: As it was I think they done an unbelievable job in getting to the final series after having played no games in January and having to play two games a week in February. But coach Jean-Paul de Marigny deserves much credit for the management of his team. However, it would seem that the program in February caught up with the team in the finals.

TD: In the light of last seasons performances who do you believe to be Marconi's most promising young players?

BM: It's very hard to predict who will be at Marconi next year because of the competition, however three young boys that I thought played quite well and showed great potential were Alex Brosque, Michael Thwaite and Nick Carle.

TD: In your opinion who was the Stallions most consistent performer last season?

BM: Until the injury late in the season Brad Maloney was a very solid midfielder with a high work rate and sixth sense getting into the box to score goals.

TD: The new APL is supposed to contain only eight teams, do you see this as a problem in any way?

BM: The actual mechanics of a new tournament of competition such as location of teams or number of teams is a secondary problem. The main problem for a new competition is serious and meaningful relationship from a commercial television company. Without a strong media support and expo-sure, any new competition will suffer the same ills as the previous NSL.

TD: In past seasons Sydney has had five teams in the NSL, the new APL is supposed to only allow one Sydney team entry into Australia's premier league. Do you think that Sydney deserves more places?

BM: I don't think it is a matter of deserves it is a matter of it justifies and deserves. Sydney has a population base but also has the soccer participant base and at this stage can justify three teams spread appropriately in the metropolitan area with both Wollongong and Central Coast capable of providing a team

Again, the major problem isn't the number of teams but the media exposure these teams will get.

TD: Will Marconi attempt to make the new National League? If so can you see them making the grade and going well against the competition in the upcoming season?

BM: I think it will be very difficult for a team just from the Marconi club. However, I do believe the south west of Sydney has the player base and the population as well as the critical aspect of being an avid soccer area to justify a team in the highest competition hopefully this will occur but that is a very tall order.

TD: Should soccer Australia attempt to get a place for an Australian team in the Asian Champions League or do you believe it would be worthwhile to attempt to make an Oceania champions league?

BM: The reality is the ASA has quite little say in what it can and can't do in Asia. The Asian confederation spans a massive geographic base encompassing some three million people, were as in Australia in its entirely there is roughly twenty billion people.

Commercially the Asian interest in Australia is quite small. The only possible solution would be a political solution one with assistance from the highest level of FIFA to assist in the development of the game in Oceania.

Alternatively, an Oceania champion's league would be good for development in the OFC however, its commercial viability and the benefit to Australian soccer development is greatly limited at this time.

Potentially a new competition targeting a maximum of eight teams from around the Pacific Rim maybe the best possible solution commercially, participially and politically.

TD: Is it true that Marconi is cutting down all of their youth teams? Why is this?

BM: I believe Marconi is limited its involvement at this stage with respect to junior teams and will continue to field in conjunction with Southern Districts teams in the metropolitan championships which is Under 11 and Under 12.

As well as premier youth. The logic behind the elimination of the teams from six to twelve playing in the local Southern Districts competitions is believed to be the way the club can reduce the conflict resulting from young players playing against Marconi junior teams and than having to support the senior team.

TD: What has changed in Australia since you played and coached? Do you think that football in Australia has become less professional?

BM: The term professional is often misunderstood in my mind it has a wide variety of connotations most simplistic is that too be professional you get payed to do your sport. The other, which I prefer to use, reflects an attitude to the sport and the way one participates.

In the first, we have obviously increased our professional nature with players now capable of earning in excess of $100,000 per a year. This compared to when I started playing when $100 a week was a good wage.

The latter approach regarding attitude is arguable with many young players seeking fame and fortunate before having a solid knowledge and experience in their sport, however throughout time high calibre players are usually characterised by a high professional attitude which than sees them justifiably rewarded in their professional feats.

SOUTH AFRICA'S WIN GIVES US HOPE

By Mark Van Aiken

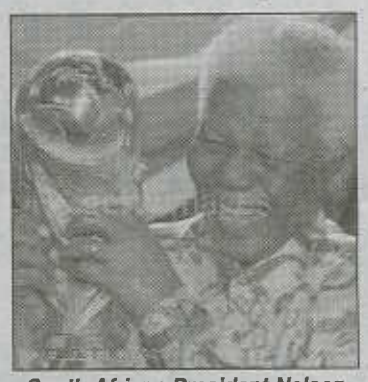
In the last week South Africa has the won the rights to stage the 2010 World Cup. The country successfully hosted the Rugby World Cup in the mid 90's and more recently the Cricket World Cup, the latter seemingly far less smoothly.

English boycotts of neighboring co-host Zimbabwe aside, it didn't appear to be a tournament that would go into the textbooks. Previous history may not even be relevant as Cricket and Rugby are the bastion of the white minority while from all reports football is the game of the indigenous majority.

The decision does in many ways give hope to Australia's chances of one day hosting the big dance. Facility wise, city wise and experience and expertise wise, Australia can do it. Sydney pulled off the smoothest Olympics ever. Pushing aside the hyperbole of it being our own Olympics for one minute, looking back it just seemed to be the whole package.

While the technology driven World Cup in Korea and Japan maybe blurred the lines for some people, Portugal's impending Euro will sharpen them again. You don't need 30 brand new half billion-dollar stadiums to host the World Cup. Portugal has an impressive array of new stadia for the tournament but they aren't all 80,000 seaters and feature retractable roofs and pitches, jet engines and sharks with fricken' lazer beams attached to their heads and so forth. Most are just good decent football stadiums.

Looking past the magnificent Stade de France at France 98, the next best stadium was in Marseille, which in fairness was more Hindmarsh Stadium then Telstra Dome. Other stadiums were smaller and less tech savvy still - the point being that they don't have to be. While Kogarah and Optus Oval may be out of the mix, most of our other big NRL and AFL aren't. And before we start moaning about round cricket and Aussie Rules grounds hosting soccer, picture the most famous of all soccer stadia – the Maracana. It has more distance from the pitch to the front row than the Gabba or MCG. Running tracks adorn many football arenas across Spain, Italy and Germany. It's not ideal but nor is it the obstacle some make it out.



South African President Nelson Mandela proudly display the World Cup after winning the 2010 bid to stage the biggest sporting spectacle aside from the Olympics.

Winning the rights to host the World Cup is of course only in part about how well you will do it. The main game is political, the game in which we have been as unsuccessful off the pitch in the past as we have on. John O'Neill talks of the 2022 World Cup, some 18 years away. He also speaks of the 'baby step' tournaments like the Confederations Cup and World Club Championship. Australia must bid for such tournaments because by the time the vote for 2022 comes around the shine and luster of Sydney 2000 will be long gone.

In 2022 the Great Southern Stand at the MCG will be 30 years old. If you consider that the long-time dilapidated Ponsford Stand was 36 years old when the bull dozers went through it last year, you can see that Australia's biggest venue may need significant surgery by then. Aussie Stadium will be 34 years young and the majority of our current crop of venues will also be long in the tooth. Add to this that a regional city or two like Newcastle, Darwin or Townsville would probably need to host some games and thus need a heavily renovated or even brand new stadium for the Cup.

The Kennett government laughably mooted plans for Victoria to bid for the World Cup alone some years back. To succeed in our next effort we need everyone behind it. Not just the ASA but all of Australia, especially from the governments, state and Commonwealth.

Australian tourism has just commenced a $360 million promotional campaign. Australia will get no better advertisement than a whole month in the lounge rooms of Europe, South America, Africa and Asia. Channel 7 is billing the Olympics as the world's biggest sporting event- WRONG. The World Cup dwarfs it. It has billions more viewers and hundreds of thousands more in the stands. To get it down under will require political smarts and salesmanship not before seen in our gameWe have a giant task in front of us.

The Lions — 2003 Champions of Queensland
133 Pine Road, Richlands. QLD
Phone: (07) 3271 3636 ● Fax: (07) 3271 3804

QLD Premier League Round 11

By Glenn Davis

With undisputed champions Queensland Lions running away with yet another premiership, the relegation battle is hotting up between four teams to stay in the Brisbane premier league.

Lions are on top of the premiership table with a commanding 10 point lead after a tough 1-nil home win over fourth placed Mitchelton.

However, at the bottom of the ladder four teams, Taringa, Souths, Toowoomba and North Star face a torrid second half of the season to avoid the drop with only three points separating the quartet.

At the weekend, South's earned a valuable point with a 3-all draw against Easts, Toowoomba also picked up a 2-all draw against Palm Bach while North Star just missed out sharing the spoils in a 2-1 loss to Rochedale.

Cellar dwellers Taringa now face an uphill task to stay up after going down to Wynnum Wolves 4-2 after the scores were 2-all at halftime.

Rochedale's win over North Star propelled Kieran Cooper's side into second place ahead of Pine Rivers on goal difference.

North Star coach Ken Swan felt sick to the stomach after the match after believing his young team were unlucky not to win.

Brisbane Strikers player-coach Stu McLaren put North Star ahead 1-nil smashing a 35 metre shot from edge of the area into the top right hand corner of the net.

However, Rochedale hit back to level just though Alec Panic just before the break.

North Star has two great chances in the second half to kill off Rochedale when the scores were still level.

Midway through the second period McLaren broke away on his own but his shot grazed the wrong side of the upright.

Midfielder Brad Stevens later struck a perfectly timed into the box for Paul Brownlie but his attempt rebounded off the crossbar.

North Star paid dearly for their missed opportunities when Rochedale broke down the left flank and crossed into the box for Grant Marshall to slot home the winner in the final minute.

"It was a pleasing performance but I felt sick after the game," Swan said.

"It's the fourth game we've lost 2-1 and lost a point in the last couple of minutes.

"The difference between the sides was our inexperience but it was an entertaining game to watch."

Swan is hopeful his young guns can avoid relegation but conceded a tough fight lay ahead.

"We need points to ensure survival," he said.

"We're playing well and aren't far off the mark.

"The competition is very close and if you take Lions out of the equation we're on par with most other sides."

Rochedale coach Kieran Cooper had no doubt his side deserved victory and disagreed with Swan's assessment.

"We had 90 per cent of possession and they got two breaks to score," he said.

"They missed two chances to go 3-1 up but they also could have been down several goals had we taken our chances."

Palm Beach Karl Herdle faces a worrying time after his side slipped up for the third successive time against teams behind them on the ladder.

Herdle can't pinpoint the reason why his side struggles against weaker sides but expects a vast improvement for Palm Beach's upcoming matches against Lions and Mitchelton.

"It's a worrying time and we've got Mitchi next week then Lions and we'll need to pull something out of the box to beat them the way we're playing," he said.

"They were the worst team we've played this year but it was the worst our defence has played as well.

"The goal they got to draw the game was a masterpiece of our inadequacies in defence."

Toowoomba took a 1-nil lead midway through the first half before Palm Beach levelled five minutes from the break through midfielder Jed Wright.

Steve Fitzsimmons, on loan from the Brisbane Strikers, produced an individual effort when he took on several Toowoomba players before drawing the keeper to slot home for a 2-1 lead midway through the second period.

Toowoomba, who rarely tested Palm Beach's keeper, levelled the scores with ten minutes to go when the visitor's had a brain explosion allowing Wayne Lucey to take on six defenders before tucking home the equaliser.

"Overall they never really tested us and always had six or seven players behind the ball," Herdle said.

"They had only two shots in the first half and about the same in the second but their tactics worked well and frustrated us," he said.

Palm Beach's tough point keeps them just outside the top four on 16 points, equal with Brisbane City who went down 2-1 to Pine Rivers.

Aaron Thiesield put Pine Rivers ahead early in the game before Brisbane City hit back with the equaliser five minutes from the break when Damian Waugh struck a 25 metre piledriver into the roof of the net.

The home side grabbed the three points late in the game when Luke Noble struck an angled shot into the top left hand corner of the net from inside the box.

Brisbane City coach Frank Pimblett was disappointed with his side's lack of penetration but conceded the game could have been over inside the first 15 minutes.

"We were slow out of the blocks for some reason and the game could have been over inside 15 minutes," Pimblett said.

"It took us 20 minutes to get the pace of the game and they killed us early on.

"However, once we started to play we dominated for the rest of the game."

Brisbane City was unlucky not to pick up the three points when veteran Mark Battistin hit the post from after kick.

"Pine Rivers are a good side and they defended quite well against us," Pimblett said.

"We were only a few points behind Pine Rivers at the start of the game now they're second and we're mid-table."

Souths showed they would not surrender easily to first division with a hard fought 3-all home draw against Easts.

Easts led three times in the match but on each occasion Souths fought back to share the spoils.

Nash Catchlove gave Easts a 1-nil, lead in the 20th minute but his good work was undone a few minutes later when he rolled an ankle was replaced.

Souths hit back straight from the kickoff through Chris Bridge before Brad Ditton put the visitors ahead for the second time drilling home a 30-metre screamer on the half hour.

However, Souths denied Easts the chance of a half time lead when they again equalised through Ray Mortensen.

Shane Coffey broke the deadlock for Easts to give the visitors a 3-2 lead midway through the second half while Souths rallied late in the match to share the points with Mortensen's second of the match for the equaliser.

Easts coach Col Bennet believed the Tigers should have won.

"Coffey had two more chances to win the game for us but missed with his chances," Bennett said.

"We were a bit naïve in defence at times but overall we played better and deserved to win."

Bennet is starting worry about Easts form lapse in the past five matches.

"We were a bit more positive this week but it's been five weeks now since our last win against Taringa," he said.

Souths coach Peter Bannon believes the draw was a step in the right direction for his side, which faces a crucial match next week against Taringa.

"We're playing well in patches but we've got to get rid of the suicide part of our game," Bannon said.

"We're making too many basic errors and getting punished.

"Easts are a good side and the difference was one or two of their better quality players."

Results & Tables

Premier League

Rochedale Rovers 2 (Panic, Marshall) v **North Star 1** (McLaren)
Half-time 1-1
Souths United 3 (Bridge, Mortensen 2) v **Eastern Suburbs 3** (Ditton, Coffey, Catchlove)
Half-time 2-2
Brisbane Wolves 4 (Gilroy, Van Moolenbroek, Lyell, Own Goal) v **Taringa Rovers 2** (Aysen, Evans)
Half-time 2-2
Palm Beach Sharks 2 (Tjin, Fitzsimmons) v **Toowoomba Raiders 2 (Lucey, Ramia)**
Half-time 1-1
Pine Rivers 2 (Thiesfield, Noble) v **Brisbane City 1** (Waugh)
Half-time 1-1
Queensland Lions 1 (Drinkeld) v **Mitchelton 0**
Half-time 0-0

	P	W	L	D	For	Ag	Pts
Queensland Lions	11	11	0	0	45	4	33
Rochedale Rovers	11	7	2	2	27	16	23
Pine Rivers	11	7	2	2	22	23	23
Mitchelton	10	5	3	2	19	13	17
Palm Beach	11	4	3	4	23	16	16
Brisbane City	11	5	5	1	17	20	16
Brisbane Wolves	10	4	5	1	19	24	13
Eastern Suburbs	11	3	6	2	15	21	11
Souths United	11	2	7	2	13	25	8
North Star	11	2	7	2	10	22	8
Toowoomba Raiders	9	2	5	2	8	23	8
Taringa Rovers	11	1	8	2	18	29	5

Premier Reserves

Rochedale Rovers 3 North Star 0, Souths United 3 Eastern Suburbs1, Brisbane Wolves 0 Taringa Rovers 0, Palm Beach 3 Toowoomba Raiders 1, Pine Rivers 1 Brisbane City 5, Queensland Lions 1 Mitchelton 0

Premier Youth

Rochedale Rovers 0 North Star 2, Souths United 5 Eastern Suburbs 2, Brisbane Wolves 1 Taringa Rovers 1, Palm Beach 4 Toowoomba Raiders 0, Pine Rivers 1 Brisbane City 2, Queensland Lions 3 Mitchelton 1

Division 1

Beenleigh 0 Peninsula Power 4, Ipswich Knights 1 Rocklea 2, Capalaba 1 Mt Gravatt 4, Redlands 2 The Gap 1, Southside Eagles 0 Brisbane Olympic 1, Albany Creek 1 Uni of Qld 2

	P	W	L	D	For	Ag	Pts
Brisbane Olympic	11	9	1	1	18	3	28
Peninsula Power	11	8	1	2	26	9	26
Uni of Qld	11	6	1	4	29	14	22
Mt Gravatt	11	6	4	1	21	14	19
Southside Eagles	11	5	4	2	17	15	17
Ipswich Knights	11	5	5	1	15	13	16
Beenleigh	11	4	4	3	18	17	15
Redlands United	11	4	5	2	21	19	14
The Gap	11	1	5	5	15	23	8
Rocklea United	11	2	7	2	8	27	8
Albany Creek	11	2	8	1	17	25	7
Capalaba	11	1	8	2	7	33	5

Division 1 Reserves

Beenleigh 1 Peninsula Power 4, Ipswich Knights 5 Rocklea 2, Capalaba 0 Mt Gravatt 5, Redlands 5 The Gap 0, Southside Eagles 1 Brisbane Olympic 4, Albany Creek 2 Uni of Qld 1

Division 1 Youth

Beenleigh 2 Peninsula Power 4, Ipswich Knights 7 Rocklea 0, Capalaba 0 Mt Gravatt 2, Redlands 1 The Gap 0, Southside Eagles 2 Brisbane Olympic 1, Albany Creek 1 Uni of Qld 3

Division 2

Moggill United 1 Brisbane Force 1, Goodna 1 Newmarket 1, Annerley 0 Ipswich City 4, North Pine 1 Grange Thistle 2, Bethania 1 Samford 0, Oxley 0 Slacks Creek 3

Division 2 Reserves

Moggill United 0 Brisbane Force 7, Goodna 3 Newmarket 1, Annerley 1 Ipswich City 3, North Pine 1 Grange Thistle 4, Bethania 5 Samford 0, Oxley 1 Slacks Creek 2

Metro 1

Acacia Ridge v Brisbane Wolves (match abandoned due to light failure), Pineapple Rovers 3 Mitchelton 3, Darra Lions 3 Taringa Rovers 1, Bayside 0 Wilston 2, Uni of Qld 2 Clairvaux 2, Park Ridge 1 Souths 1

Metro 2

Mooroondu 2 Brighton 2, Redcliffe PCYC 1 Logan City Kings 3, Pine Hills 2 Ridge Hills 1, Newmarket 1 Brisbane Toro 5, Pine Rivers 5 The Gap 1

Metro 3

Acacia Ridge v Pine Hills (match abandoned due to light failure), Pineapple Rovers 3 North Pine 1, Eastern Suburbs 2 Souths 0, Darra Lions 2 Newmarket 1, Bayside 2 GrangeThistle 0, Uni of Qld 1 Clairvaux 2

Metro 4

Acacia Ridge 3 The Gap 0, Regents Park 4 Mt Gravatt 0, Newmarket 3 Brisbane City 2, Southside Eagles 2 Beenleigh 2, Old Bridge 1 Taringa Rovers 1, Slacks Creek 0 Brisbane Force 4

Metro 5

Brighton 5 Redlands 0, Ridge Hills v Brisbane Olympic (match abandoned), Newmarket 3 Clairvaux 1, Eastern Suburbs 0 North Star 6, Annerley 0 Ipswich City 1, Slacks Creek 5 Albany Creek 0

Metro 6

Mooroondu 3 Mt Gravatt 3, Brisbane Wolves 0 Albany Creek 7, Goodna 2 Camira 2, Park Ridge 2 Regents Park 1

Youth League

Rochedale Rovers 0 Queensland Lions 5, Souths United 11 Slacks Creek 0, North Pine 5 Toowoomba Raiders 2, Bethania 2 Brisbane Force 0

ITALIAN

ITALIAN AFFAIR

Sampdoria and Modena have been drawn into an investigation into mafia-linked illegal betting and match-fixing in Serie A and lower division Italian matches.

Sampdoria defender Stefano Bettarini, who played in Italy's friendly in February against the Czech Republic, and Modena midfielder Antonio Marasco were among six new people named in the probe by Naples-based police.

In a statement, Sampdoria confirmed police had visited their offices to acquire documents and information relating to the investigation. The club stressed that "no charge has been made against any director of the club".

Earlier this month, police began investigations into 12 clubs.

Serie A clubs Chievo, Lecce and Reggina were among those being probed. Each said that while their offices had been visited, neither they nor any of their players had been formally placed under investigation and no documents had been taken away.

★ ★ ★

Italian striker Paolo Di Canio, out of contract at Charlton Athletic and yet to agree a new deal, is wanted by English second division side Brentford.

The fiery 35-year-old joined Charlton from West Ham United in a one-season deal last August.

"I can confirm that I have genuine interest in bringing Paolo Di Canio to Brentford," Allen told the west London club's website.

"I will be discussing with the board early next week hoping that we can put a financial package together that would make it acceptable, just for one year, for Paolo to join us."

Di Canio, who has also played for Sheffield Wednesday, Celtic and a host of top Italian clubs, made 23 league starts for Charlton this season, scoring four goals.

★ ★ ★

AS Roma sold Argentina defender Walter Samuel to Real Madrid for 25 million euros, the Serie A club said.

Samuel moves to the Spanish giants on a five-year contract but the financial terms of the deal were not disclosed.

The 26-year-old Argentine international joined Roma from Boca Juniors in 2000.

He will join his new club on July 1. His arrival is a response to criticisms that Real Madrid's squad lacked strength at the back.

Samuel is the second player in the past week to leave the financially-troubled Serie A team following French defender Jonathan Zebina, who signed for Juventus.

Earlier this season Italian sports daily La Gazzetta dello Sport estimated Roma's debts at 250 million euros.

★ ★ ★

Marseille president Christophe Bouchet is to write to European soccer's governing body UEFA about Pierluigi Collina's refereeing in the UEFA Cup final.

Marseille lost 2-0 to Valencia after French international goalkeeper Fabien Barthez was sent off by the Italian referee for bringing down Spanish striker Mista inside the box.

"It's not a refereeing decision, it's the end of the game," Bouchet told sports daily l'Equipe.

"I was sitting next to UEFA president Lennart Johansson and he said he was dumbfounded too," he added.

Bouchet also accused Collina, widely considered as one of the world's best referees, of being too friendly with Valencia players.

"Collina greeted the Spaniards one after the other before the game and even kissed (fullback Amedeo) Carboni. At the end of the game, the Spaniards all cheered him.

"Carboni went to the referees' dressing room after the match and came out without his shirt," he said.

"I'm going to write to UEFA to tell them about these facts," he added.

Stam signs for Milan on 2-year deal

Italian champions AC Milan have signed Dutch international defender Jaap Stam from Lazio on a two-year deal, the club said last week.

The former Manchester United player had been linked with a move to Milan for several months after Lazio said they would have to sell him before the final year of his contract.

Lazio said in a statement that the deal was worth a total of _10.5 million to the Rome club.

Stam will be re-united with his former Lazio team mate Alessandro Nesta in the centre of the Milan defence.

The shaven-headed defender made his name in the Netherlands with PSV Eindhoven before moving to Manchester United in 1998 where he helped the club win the European Cup a year later.

They call him Jaap Stam: AC Milan's first signing.

A strong central defender, who has also operated at right-back for Lazio, Stam moved to Rome in August 2001 after a reported dispute with United manager Alex Ferguson.

The 31-year-old will now make up what looks a formidable defence with captain Paolo Maldini and Brazil captain Cafu in the full back positions.

Milan had already signed French midfielder Vikash Dhorasoo from Olympique Lyon this month and on Sunday club vice-president Adriano Galliani said no other deals were planned.

'We have a squad that won the Champions League last season and has just won the 'scudetto' and I think we are fine as we are,' said Galliani, who effectively runs the club on behalf of its owner, Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi.

Shevchenko wins Serie A 'golden boot'

AC Milan's Ukrainian striker Andriy Shevchenko finished the season as Serie A top scorer but almost lost the prize on the final day to Parma's Alberto Gilardino who struck four goals in a 4-3 win over Udinese.

Shevchenko's simple tap-in during Milan's 4-2 win over Brescia on Sunday ensured he ended the campaign with 24 goals for the third time in five seasons in Italy's top flight.

The goal also moved him above Dutchman Marco van Basten into fifth placed in Milan's all-time scoring list with 91 goals.

Shevchenko's goal against Roma two weeks ago wrapped up the title for Milan and came after last season's Champions League final win over Juventus when he grabbed the decisive penalty in the shootout.

'It has been two great years and these victories are the fruit of all the hard work at all levels of the club,' said Shevchenko.

The striker's goals were vital to Milan's 17th Serie A title win but Shevchenko's scoring talents will be missing from nest month's European championship after Ukraine failed to qualify.

TOO GOOD OF A SERIE A YEAR: AC Milan's Andriy Shevchenko

Four superbly-taken goals against Udinese took the outstanding Gilardino within a single goal of Shevchenko.

The Italy under-21 striker's efforts were not enough to see Parma into the top four but he could now have a chance to feature for his country in the Euro 2004 finals in Portugal.

The injury to Shevchenko's Milan strike partner Filippo Inzaghi has opened up a gap in Giovanni Trapattoni's squad that Gilardino hopes he could fill.

'Yes, I have some hope after a season like this,' said the 21-year-old who had managed just 12 goals in four seasons since making his top flight debut with Piacenza in the 1999-2000 season.

'But now I am focused on the important games coming up with the under-21 side in the European championship,' he said.

After his explosive form this season Gilardino is also being linked with a move away from financially-troubled Parma but says he is in no hurry to leave.

'It wouldn't be a surprise if a few clubs were interested after all these goals but I am happy here. It is a good atmosphere at this club and I feel well here,' he said.

ITALIAN NEWS AND RUMOURS

Alberto Gilardino, author of a poker of goals against Udinese, spoke about his present and more importantly his future situation.

The Parma striker declared: "Right now I cannot decide anything because Parma's club situation is particular. I would like to stay here for one or more years, but we must keep the same coach, staff and players. If 3 or 4 leave I would act consequently. It's too early to say in which team I would like to play. My dream is of winning the Champions League."

'Camera's ready prepare to flash' – Will Italian glamour boy Francesco Totti do the unthinkable and join AC Milan?

According to reports in Italy, Juan Sebastian Veron will begin talks with Inter over a move to the San Siro.

The Nerazzurri have been linked with the Argentine for a number of weeks, and it seems as if the player is keen to leave Chelsea, thus ending his Premiership nightmare.

It is hoped that Veron could provide the spark that Inter so often seem to lack in midfield.

Chelsea look as though they will be making major summer signings with Veron expected to be on the outer.

Roma defender Christian Panucci says that team-mate Walter Samuel would be better off joining Real Madrid than Chelsea.

The Argentine has been strongly linked with both clubs, and Panucci said: "In that case, I would say 'choose Real Madrid'. Without a doubt.

"It's not only a question of prestige, since we're talking about the most important club in the world, but also the quality of life and also the football. "Samuel has everything ... and he's also a good bloke."

Following Inter's qualification for the Champions League, president Facinto Facchetti has announced that Alberto Zaccheroni's job as coach is safe.

"We have decided to continue our relationship," he said. "I already said he would stay last Sunday and owner Massimo Moratti mirrored that statement during the week."

Christian Vieri has announced once again that he doesn't want to leave Inter and he doesn't have a problem with Zaccheroni.

"I have never argued with the manager and I have never told him what to do because I respect him," the striker said. "I want to play for Inter as long as possible and will be here next season as well".

"I'll change club only if Moratti wants me to go away," he added. "I hope that next year can be a good one for us and for the fans because they deserve it".

Roberto Mancini is proud of his players and he is happy even if Lazio didn't manage to qualify for the Champions League.

"I have to thank the fans because they always gave us their support and they are very important for this team," he said. "This year we have won the Coppa Italia and I don't consider it a failure".

"The last two years have been fantastic if you consider all that we have been through," he added. "I think that we have done something special and the fans know it as well".

Cesare Prandelli hasn't decided what he will do next season and after the victory against Udinese he announced that he will explain things in couple of days.

"I might still be Parma's manager in couple of months," he said. "I have been thinking about it for the last few days and I will let you know during the week what will happen".

"I haven't spoken to anybody at Juventus and that is all that I'm going to say for now," he added. "The club already knows what I have to say but you'll have to wait a bit".

Siena's coach, Giuseppe Papadopulo, who guided the Tuscan club to a deserved stay in Serie A in their first season back in the top flight, is awaiting a contract extension from his club.

The bianconero coach's current contract expires in 2005, and Papadopulo will be hoping to receive a renewal till 2006.

AS Roma star Francesco Totti last week had been linked with an astonishing move to Serie A champions AC Milan.

Totti, who stated that he will leave Rome if no big signings are seen in the summer off-season was linked with Spanish giants Real Madrid.

However, after Jaap Stam's move to AC Milan, it is believed that one more player is needed to complete the side for next year and Totti could be that final piece.

ENGLISH

Keown XI hit England for six

David Beckham's relationship with Real Madrid showed further signs of strain as the England captain was barred from taking any meaningful part in Martin Keown's testimonial at Highbury.

With speculation linking him with a possible summer move back to England, the midfielder was said by some to have played his last game ever for Real.

Beckham responded by making an apparent point in not only kicking off, as he was allowed to do by Real after some plea-bargaining, but also in remaining on the pitch for a full three minutes.

He took seven touches of the ball before ignoring the first attempt to substitute him and only reluctantly trotted off to be replaced by an evergreen Paul Gascoigne.

The fans nevertheless booed the statement read out just before kick-off, which had been handed to the Arsenal club secretary by Beckham's representatives.

It read: 'It is with deepest regret that Real Madrid have refused permission for David to participate in this evening's game, so out of respect to Martin, David can regrettably only start this evening's game.'

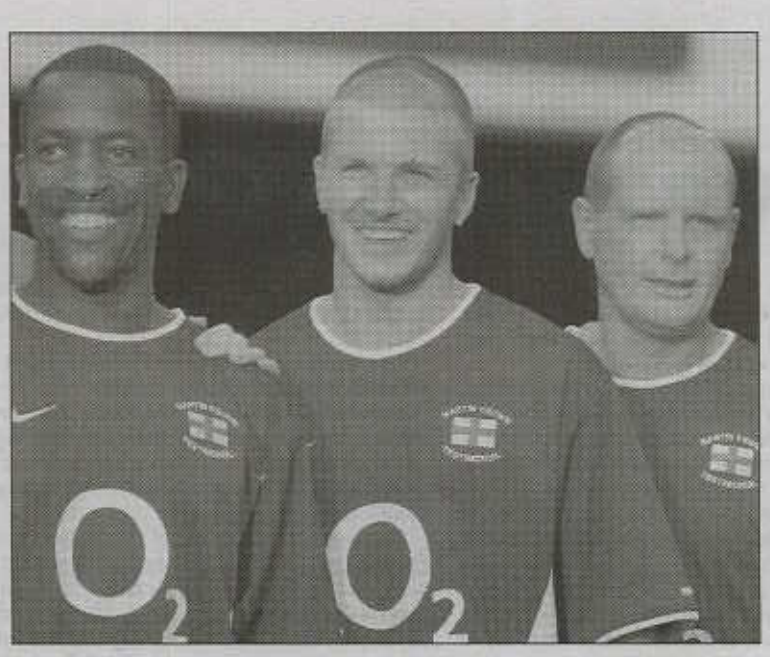
John Terry, Sol Campbell and Ashley Cole - play for the first 45 minutes without major incident, while Joe Cole featured in the second half.

That was in contrast to French internationals Thierry Henry, Robert Pires and Patrick Vieira, who lasted 10 minutes before going off as they are involved in a FIFA-organised game against Brazil on Thursday in Paris.

Henry still had time to partner Ian Wright up front after being given the Premiership golden boot by Arsenal's record goalscorer before kick-off.

It was not long though before full-back Cole put the Arsenal XI ahead on 16 minutes with a superb back-flick from Fredrik Ljungberg's cross.

Jeremie Aliadiere put Arsenal further ahead on 23 minutes as he raced onto a through-ball from Dennis Bergkamp and easily went round Robert Green.



Not a bad threesome: Chris Powell – David Beckham and Paul Gascoigne during Martin Keown's testimonial game

The Norwich 'keeper then brought down Edu to hand Arsenal a penalty but rather spoiled the party as he saved not only Keown's spot-kick but also his follow-up effort.

Jose Reyes showed his true quality by adding a superb second-half hat-trick, while Aliadiere struck an overhead kick from the vibrant Spaniard's cross.

Wright, meanwhile, appeared for both sides as he joined son Shaun Wright-Phillips in the England line-up as a substitute.

Keown, who made his Arsenal first-team debut in 1985, left the club for spells at Aston Villa and Everton but returned in the 1990s to win three titles under Arsene Wenger.

Along with Tony Adams, Nigel Winterburn, Lee Dixon and Steve Bould, as well as David Seaman, he was part of the famous Arsenal rearguard.

English News and Rumours

Thailand's Prime Minister Thaksin Shiniwatra has said that his £60 million bid for a 30 per cent stake in Liverpool Football Club has been accepted.

"In principle they agreed to give it to us and now we are working on details," said Thaksin.

He added that the two sides had reached agreement on 60 per cent of the deal, but warned that he was continuing to look at alternative possibilities in case Liverpool stall.

"I do hope we won't have any problems," he said. "But if we cannot agree with Liverpool we still have alternatives."

The Thai deal is, however, now expected to go through within the next couple of days.

"Now 60 per cent is comfortable, and there's still another 40 per cent that we still have to discuss before we agree," said Thaksin. "In principle there shouldn't be any problem.

Thaksin, 54, with a personal fortune estimated to be £560 million, added: "We submitted the MOU (memorandum of understanding) to them and they countered with their draft to us and then we have to have further negotiation.

Everton manager David Moyes has confirmed that he will not be bidding to make Francis Jeffers' loan move from Arsenal a permanent deal.

Moyes has also announced that Scot Gemmill, Niclas Alexandersson and Paul Gerrard are being released.

And he has made it clear there will be wholesale changes to his squad following their "unacceptable" 5-1 defeat at the hands of Manchester City in the final game of the season.

"There are no words for that, it just wasn't acceptable for Everton and it hasn't been acceptable all season," he told the club's website.

"It was the last game of the season and there are a few players who'll not be here when we start again.

Leeds striker Alan Smith insists he is in no rush to decide where he will be playing his football next season.

Smith is certain to leave Elland Road this summer and there appears to be no shortage of interest in the 23-year-old. However, he said: "I am not in any rush. I want to make sure that the move I do make is the right one for my career and the right one for Alan Smith. I think that is vital.

Italy and Spain could be Alan Smith's calling card next season.

"If you are going to move on from the club you have always been at all your life, the next move is a massive step in your career. I have to see what comes in and who wants me and make my decision from there.

"The fans want the best for their club. Me moving on won't help Leeds unfortunately but it will help Alan Smith. I have got to think about my own career now.

"I have spoken out a few times to say I want to go to Spain or Italy. And I would love to do that, whether it will be at this stage of my career or my next move. If that opportunity came up it would be hard to turn down."

Leicester City have released some of their most experienced players following their relegation from the Premiership.

In total 13 first team players have been shown the door, while Paul Dickov and Ricardo Scimeca are in talks with other clubs.

Some of the departing players are Muzzy Izzet, Steve Guppy, Billy McKinlay, Callum Davidson, Craig Hignett, Steffen Freund, Frank Sinclair and Andrew Impey.

However, Les Ferdinand is to be given a one-year deal to stay on with the Foxes.

Juan Pablo Angel is "very, very optimistic" of signing a new contract to keep himself at Aston Villa.

The Colombian striker is hoping to put pen to paper before departing for the Copa America.

Angel, who initially struggled in English football, has scored 23 goals this season and is to be rewarded with a four-year deal.

He said: "I am very, very optimistic (over a new contract) but we are still talking. I would like to have something agreed in the next few weeks - certainly before I go to the Copa America tournament with Colombia.

"I will be 32 at the end of this new deal and I hope my best years are coming. Right now, I feel more mature and a better player. I look at the manager, the team we have got and hopefully the strengthening we can do this summer."

'Should I take the Spurs job?' – John Tigana looks bemused about the prospect of taking of Tottenham next year

Tottenham's under-pressure chairman Daniel Levy has held talks with former Fulham boss Jean Tigana about taking over at White Hart Lane, according to the *Daily Telegraph*.

The Frenchman left the Cottagers before the end of last season after his spell with the London club turned sour and his appointment at Spurs would be unpopular with their long-suffering supporters.

Levy appears to be running out of options after receiving a number of snubs in his long search to replace Glenn Hoddle, who was sacked in September.

Martin O'Neill, Claudio Ranieri and Raddy Antic continue to be linked, although 50 different managers have had their names associated with the position.

Robbie Savage running in an Aston Villa kit? I'd like to see that.

Arsene Wenger has confirmed that Sylvain Wiltord will leave Arsenal this summer.

The French international is out of contract next month and he will be able to leave on a free transfer having failed to agree terms with the Gunners.

The 29-year-old, who was Arsenal's most expensive signing when he joined form Bordeaux for £11m in 2000, has been tipped to join German champions Werder Bremen. Injuries have limited his chances this season.

Aston Villa have dismissed speculation linking them with a summer move for Birmingham midfielder Robbie Savage.

The Wales international has been mentioned as one of Villa boss David O'Leary's potential targets but the club have denied any interest.

Chief executive Bruce Langham told the club's official website, www.avfc.co.uk: 'As David O'Leary said last week, he has given the board a list of the men he would like to bring in this summer but Robbie Savage is not on that list.

'This is just a silly season story that has no basis in fact and a lot of people are getting hot under the collar for no reason at all.'

Arsenal midfielder Robert Pires has defended the massive salaries paid to the game's top stars.

The Frenchman, a key part of the Arsenal side which went the whole Premiership season unbeaten on their way to the title, insists players cannot be blamed for accepting the wages offered by clubs.

Pires revealed in an interview to French magazine 'Les Inrocks So Foot' that he is paid 'between _229,000 (£155,000) and _305,000 (£208,000)' per month by the Gunners.

Sam Allardyce is on the verge of giving up his bid to attract Rivaldo to Bolton.

And he has warned the Brazil playmaker to make up his mind after a month of indecision. Celtic are also interested in Rivaldo - and Allardyce is running out of patience.

'If it is about a money move, I don't really want him anyway,' said the Bolton boss. 'It has got to be about a football move for him in the best division in the world now.

'I think he is doing what most Brazilians do - they have too many advisors to begin with. That makes it a lot more difficult for the player to make his mind up and I am not sure where it lies any more with Rivaldo.

'We cannot wait forever. I suspect the main reason is there are bigger packages elsewhere. You might have thought we could go the extra little bit but we can't.'

EUROPEAN CH

PORTUGAL 200

Written and compile

SWEDEN

Like their Scandinavian neighbours to the south, Sweden have an impressive reputation when it comes to qualifying for football tournaments, and then performing well once they arrive on the big stage.

The reason for this is the no-nonsense approach of Swedish football as a whole. While one would never usually describe Swedes as the most passionate of football fans, the sport is serious business, and for a national team with so few recognised players, the success rate is very good indeed.

Sweden hardly ever give away cheaply, they are thorough in their preparation and organisation, and they believe in solidity and teamwork over flair and panache.

At the helm is the duo of Lars Lagerback and Tommy Soderberg, who has been involved since 1997 - the middle of a difficult period for Swedish football as the national team failed to qualify for both Euro 96 and the 1998 World Cup.

This unusual arrangement has received its fair share of critics. During their time together, Lagerback and Soderberg have presided over a team which was eliminated in the first round of Euro 2000 before being eliminated in the second round by Senegal in the 2002 World Cup, during which they topped the so-called group of death, (which contained England, Argentina and Nigeria).

Results have been mixed, although qualification has been consistently achieved. For Soderberg, 55, these European Championships will be his final tournament in the coaching role, leaving the reins for Lagerback, who will lead the way until 2006.

Lagerback is the more tactically minded of the two, while Soderberg's man-management skills will be missed in the years to come.

Speaking of tactics, Sweden will operate with a conventional back four, four in midfield and two strikers.

Veteran goalkeeper Magnus Hedman has been frozen out from a first team berth for Euro 2004, replaced by emerging talent Andreas Isaksson, 22, who was Gianluigi Buffon's understudy at Juventus for a while.

In front of him is the central defensive pairing of Olof Mellberg (the new captain) and Michael Svensson, both based in England, while Teddy Lucic and Erik Edman are the two full-backs.

There are a number of options in midfield, and the players are entering the prime of their careers.

In the midfield holding role, Celtic,s Johan Mjallby or Andreas Jakobsson may play because of their age and experience, although Everton man Tobias Linderoth is a favourite for this defensive position as he will more than likely adapt to the conditions better as he is in his mid-twenties.

Sweden can boast one of the Arsenal invincibles, in midfield. Fredrik Ljungberg has not had the greatest season for his club side, and he has yet to truly shine for his national side, but his purposeful running and penchant for scoring important goals could prove invaluable in tight group circumstances.

He can play on the right or left flank, although he is quite capable of playing through the centre, where of course he will receive more of the ball and have more opportunities to make a positive contribution to his team's campaign.

The other two positions will be contested between Mikael Nilsson, Anders Svensson and youngster Kim Kallstrom.

But the X-Factor as far as the the three areas of the field are concerned is the attack.

Goalscoring legend Henrik Larsson has stepped out of international retirement to lead the line for his nation in a major tournament once again, and he may just prove the difference between progression beyond Group C and early elimination.

Partnering him up front will be giant Ajax star Zlatan Ibrahimovic. The 22-year-old will need to keep his temperament in check while in Portugal, as he is known to offer his thoughts on many topics on many occasions.

Should Larsson and Ibrahimovic gel together come finals time, and receive adequate support from Ljungberg and co., then Sweden will well and truly fire on all cylinders.

Recent form has been fairly inconsistent however, losses to Egypt, Norway and Albania were disappointing, but a 1-0 victory over England has boosted their confidence and Sweden then managed an away draw against the host nation.

ABSW Prediction: Quarter-finalists.

SQUAD LIST:

Magnus Hedman	goalkeeper	Ancona (Italy)	31
Andreas Isaksson	goalkeeper	Djurgardens	22
Peter Hansson	defender	Heerenveen (Holland)	
Erik Edman	defender	Heerenveen (Holland)	25
Andreas Jakobsson	defender	Brondby (Denmark)	31
Teddy Lucic	defender	Bayer Leverkusen (Ger)	31
Olof Mellberg	defender	Aston Villa (England)	26
Michael Svensson	defender	Southampton (Eng)	28
Johan Mjallby	defender	Celtic (Scotland)	33
Erik Wahlstedt	defender	Helsingborgs	
Pontus Farnerud	midfielder	Strasbourg (France)	
Anders Andersson	midfielder	Belenenses (Portugal)	30
Kim Kallstrom	midfielder	Rennes (France)	21
Tobias Linderoth	midfielder	Everton (England)	25
Fredrik Ljungberg	midfielder	Arsenal (England)	27
Mikael Nilsson	midfielder	Halmstads	25
Anders Svensson	midfielder	Southampton (Eng)	27
C Wilhelmsson	midfielder	Anderlecht (Belgium)	
Matias Jonson	striker	Brondby (Denmark)	30
Marcus Allback	striker	Aston Villa (England)	30
Zlatan Ibrahimovic	striker	Ajax A'dam (Holland)	22
Henrik Larsson	striker	Celtic (Scotland)	32

BULGARIA

Bulgaria will be most people's favourites to be eliminated in the first round of Euro 2004, but this underdog tag will no doubt suit the players and coach.

The team entered the qualifiers in a tough group which included Belgium and Croatia, and not many people gave them a chance.

In the end, they topped the group with a match to spare, knocking off both of their main adversaries and keeping the Goals Conceded tally down to a bare minimum.

They will hope to have similar success in Portugal, in a group which sees them have a realistic chance of progressing.

While the biggest test will come when they play Italy - a rematch of the 1994 World Cup semi-final - Bulgarian supporters will feel confident of obtaining positive results against the two Scandinavian nations who are practically in the same boat as them.

The first match will see them take on Sweden, who they lost 4-0 to in the play-off for third place ten years ago.

While not one member of that incredible team remains, coach Plamen Markov will attempt to use the revenge factor as an inspirational tool.

Markov, at only 46 years of age, has enjoyed a meteoric rise to the national coaching post - he was appointed directly from a Bulgarian second division team - a choice which sparked debate in the country.

He has been able to work well with the youngsters in the team especially, and he has helped them mature as players.

Markov has been one of the main reasons why Bulgaria has achieved so much success at Euro level.

His 24-year old captain, Stilian Petrov of Scottish champions Celtic, epitomises the confidence and maturity of the entire team.

Petrov is a national celebrity back home, his wedding was televised live in 2001, and his brilliant performances in the Scottish Premier League suggest that he will be a star for Bulgaria. Petrov is likened to David Beckham of England with his stardom in his country that has captured the imaginations of the entire country.

Other important players include the two wingers, Martin Petrov and Georgi Peev, and old heads Marian Hristov and Daniel Borimirov, who will compete for the final midfield slot.

Up front, Dimitar Berbatov stands out as a quality centre forward, but he will have to make do without Portsmouth's Svetoslav Todorov, who has succumbed to knee ligament damage.

Todorov's loss has been a massive blow for the Balkan side as a lot of the goals Bulgaria scored during the qualifiers were through the Portsmouth attacker.

Berbatov has had a sterling career in Germany with Bayer Leverkusen and has been the driving force behind the German club's attack.

Meanwhile in defence, experienced campaigners Ivailo Petkov and Predrag Pazin lead the way, with the other positions dominated by Litex Lovech players. Zdravko Zdravkov is first choice in goals and has been for quite some time now and has kept well under the sticks.

Vladimir Manchev could also pose a threat to their rival European sides as the Bulgarian star is doing well at French side Lille.

Bulgaria are certainly surprise entrants in these European Championships, and the task for them will be to build for the next few years, and a strong performance and possible qualification from Group C might just do the trick.

Just like fellow Balkan neighbours Greece, Bulgaria could spring a few upsets against either Sweden or Denmark but their hands will be all but tied when they face the might of Italy.

Rest assured, the entire country of Bulgaria will be in full force cheering on their squad and no matter what the result, they will still be their heroes.

ABSW Prediction: First Round.

SQUAD LIST:

Dimitar Ivankov	goalkeeper	Levski Sofia	28
Zdravko Zdravkov	goalkeeper	Litex Lovech	33
Rosen Kirilov	defender	Litex Lovech	31
Nikolai Krastev	defender	Naftex	24
Predrag Pazin	defender	S Donetsk (Ukraine)	31
Ivailo Petkov	defender	Fenerbahce (Turkey)	28
Ilian Stoianov	defender	Levski Sofia	27
Zlatomir Zagorcic	defender	Litex Lovech	33
Zhivko Zhelev	defender	Litex Lovech	24
Daniel Borimirov	midfielder	Levski Sofia	34
Marian Hristov	midfielder	Kaiserslautern (Ger)	30
Georgi Peev	midfielder	Kyiv Dynamo (Ukraine)	25
Milen Petkov	midfielder	AEK Athens (Greece)	30
Stilian Petrov	midfielder	Celtic (Scotland)	24
Todor Yanchev	midfielder	CSKA Sofia	28
Dimitar Berbatov	striker	Bayer Leverkusen (Ger)	23
Velizar Dimitrov	striker	CSKA Sofia	25
Zoran Jankovic	striker	Litex Lovech	30
Vladimir Manchev	striker	Lille (France)	26
Martin Petrov	striker	Wolfsburg (Germany)	25

AMPIONSHIPS

4 GROUP B

by Peter Damalas.

DENMARK

he Great Danes have dominated the news on these shores in recent weeks, with the Royal Wedding taking place last weekend.

And this football team are capable of capturing the imagination of urope in these Championships.

Morten Olsen has assembled a squad that can rightly call itself a rk horse, for the tournament. The Danes regularly bring strong, mpetitive squads to major events, and usually stick around yond the first stage.

While the likes of giant goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel, and the udrup brothers - Michael and Brian - have long retired from footall, the current group are well versed in Olsen's teamwork ethic, hich in effect cancels out Denmark's lack of superstar quality.

Among their strengths are a well organised defence, combative idfield, speed and penetration on the flanks, and some useful rikers up front.

The majority of first team players belong to important European ubs, and have acquired good experiences playing against the very est in the world.

In goals, Aston Villa's Thomas Sorensen is first choice, and he fers a safe set of hands, if not Schmeichel's charismatic persona. His back-ups however, certainly lack his experience.

In the centre of defence, veteran Rene Henriksen and AC Milan's artin Laursen (who has not played often this season) are a decent artnership, but question marks may be raised about their fitness nd lack of game time this season.

Thomas Helveg and Niclas Jensen will play on the right and left spectively.

Denmark lack depth in these departments, and they will have to ay free of injury trouble or suspensions during the tournament as ere is precious few international standard replacements for them.

Olsen's formation changes from 4-3-3 to 4-2-3-1, and any hanges made during the tournament will directly impact the midld.

In the latter model, Olsen has the likes of Christian Poulsen, Claus Jensen and Everton's battler Thomas Gravesen to choose from for the two central midfield berths.

Another option is to play all three across midfield, with two wingers pushed up front alongside the central striker.

On the flanks, Dennis Rommedahl and Jesper Gronkjaer- who has impressed for Chelsea at the back end of their season- will cause major problems for opposing fullbacks, especially older, slower defenders like Christian Panucci.

AC Milan striker Jon Dahl Tomasson has impressed in his second season with the Italian champions. He has been used quite often by coach Carlo Ancelotti, and he has never let his coach or his teammates down.

The 27-year old has the ability to turn a match around even though at first glance he appears to be a simple player.

Tomasson may be utilised as a sole striker in a counter-attacking system deployed by the coach, but he is arguably at his best when operating behind or alongside a more powerful target man, and Schalke's Ebbe Sand fits the bill perfectly.

Big tournaments are frequently won by teams with the best squads in terms of player depth, while luck (in terms of injuries) and teamwork also play its part in overall success.

While Denmark certainly possess the latter quality - there are no egos to contend with - the lack of real class or even suitable backups on the bench precludes them from competing at the very end.

Certainly, they are strong enough to escape from Group C, but injury to any key player mentioned above may bring about their end (they were thrased 3-0 by England in the Round of 16 in the 2002 World Cup after their squad was ravaged by injury).

The third and final Group C clash pits Denmark with Scandinavian rivals Sweden in a contest which will decide who progresses to the quarter-finals and who returns home early.

This team has the toughness and the ability to trouble Italy in the first match, while they should prove too strong for Bulgaria, so the Scandinavian derby will be key to their chances.

ABSW Prediction: Second Round.

SQUAD LIST:

Thomas Sorensen	goalkeeper	Aston Villa (England)	28
Peter Skov-Jensen	goalkeeper	Midtjylland	33
Stephan Andersen	goalkeeper	Akademisk Boldklub	
Rene Henriksen	defender	Panathinaikos (Greece)	34
Martin Laursen	defender	AC Milan (Italy)	26
Niclas Jensen	defender	B Dortmund (Ger)	29
Thomas Helveg	defender	Internazionale (Italy)	33
Per Kroldrup	defender	Udinese (Italy)	
Brian Priske	defender	Genk (Belgium)	27
Kasper Bogelund	defender	PSV E'hoven (Holland)	23
Morten Wieghorst	midfielder	Brondby	33
Thomas Gravesen	midfielder	Everton (England)	28
Claus Jensen	midfielder	Charlton Athletic (Eng)	27
Daniel Jensen	midfielder	Real Murcia (Spain)	
Christian Poulsen	midfielder	Schalke 04 (Ger)	24
Jesper Gronkjaer	midfielder	Chelsea (England)	26
Martin Jorgensen	midfielder	Udinese (Italy)	28
Jon Dahl Tomasson	striker	AC Milan (Italy)	27
Ebbe Sand	striker	Schalke 04 (Ger)	31
Dennis Rommedahl	striker	PSV E'hoven (Holland)	25
Peter Madsen	striker	Bochum (Germany)	
Kenneth Perez	striker	AZ Alkmaar (Holland)	
Peter Lovenkrands	striker	Rangers (Scotland)	24

ITALY

The Azzurri are always among the favourites when it comes to otball tournaments, and this time it is no different.

Italy have an excellent record in terms of not losing matches, but ey have also suffered due to an inability to kill off opponents when ey have the opportunity, and this certainly haunted them in the uro 2000 Final against France in Rotterdam.

This squad is a well-rounded one, boasting a world-class goalseeper and defenders, a tigerish midfield and depth and talent in ttack.

But there were concerns during qualification that Italy might miss ut altogether.

Giovanni Trapattoni's side were in a state of shock following the orld Cup demise, and were listless in the loss to Wales in Cardiff.

A number of changes were made in 2003, and these certainly orked as Italy reeled off the wins, culminating in a spectacular 4-0 rashing of the Welsh in Milan in what was heralded as the birth of new attacking style of football.

Trapattoni will bear a great deal of expectation on his shoulders, nd Italian fans will hope that he keeps the attacking momentum oing into the tournament and not revert to type.

The recent draw with Spain saw a few chinks in the armoury. Italy ere overrun in midfield and were mostly defensive in their pproach.

But with so many brilliant attackers to choose from, it would be olish of Trapattoni to play the catenaccio style- where most of the layers are committed behind the ball with a sole striker staying up ont to capitalise on any quick breaks.

The veteran coach, affectionately known as 'Il Trap', has chieved everything at club level and would like to end his internaonal coaching career with a major trophy in his hands. His popurity will surely plummet should he fail, and Juventus coach arcello Lippi is poised to replace him.

Goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon proved he is the best in the world ith a stellar performance in Juventus' Champions League loss to C Milan last year, but his defenders have let him down this seaon.

Perennial understudy and hero of the Euro 2000 campaign, rancesco Toldo, is under pressure to retain his spot from the likes f Ivan Pelizzoli and Angelo Peruzzi of Lazio, who at 35, may be a urprise inclusion after a five year hiatus from the national team.

Stylish centre backs Fabio Cannavaro (captain) and Alessandro Nesta are perhaps the greatest defensive pairing in the world, although the former has been injured this season and has not been at peak form.

Meanwhile, the rise of Nesta may be attributed to the fact that he has theperfect teacher in Paolo Maldini at AC Milan.

The 35-year old former leader is sticking by his decision to retire frominternational football despite Trapattoni's earnest pleading for him toreconsider. Maldini's inclusion would definitely help the cause, as he can slotin at left-back or in the centre and provide the depth and experience that thebackline requires.

However, this would be to deny the tremendous job that the current back fourhave done.

Gianluca Zambrotta- a converted wide midfielder- will fill Maldini's position onthe left. His forward runs and precise crosses are a valuable weapon goingforward, but he is yet to convince in his defensive duties, hence the selectionof Giuseppe Favalli as back-up.

On the opposite side, the much-travelled Christian Panucci and Lazio's attackingfull-back Massimo Oddo will vye for the one position.

Parma's Matteo Ferrari, who has attracted the attentions of Manchester United,will slot into the centre in the case of injury or suspension, but beyond himthe defensive cupboard is quite bare.

In midfield, Trapattoni will employ two defensive central midfielders and threeattacking players that work off both flanks and in the centre, in support of alone striker. Another option is to play with the 4-3-1-2 system used by Carlo Ancelotti in Milan.

Unsung hero Simone Perrotta will fill one of the defensive berths, whileCristiano Zanetti, Massimo Ambrosini, Gennaro Gattuso and Andrea Pirlo are options for the other position.

Pirlo has developed as an excellent distributer of the ball in the mould of past Italy will struggle to assert itself in the middle of the field, and the first two opponents will attempt to exploit this weakness through their tenacious midfielders.

On the right, Stefano Fiore's Coppa Italia feats have all but confirmed him as a starter ahead of Mauro Camoranesi.

Due to the lack of specialist wingers, Trapattoni will place a striker on the left flank.

Star player Alessandro Del Piero has played in this position on a number of Occasions.

The final two positions will certainly be taken up by key players Francesco Totti and Christian Vieri.

The former has electrified the Eternal City with his skills, and he could be the star of the tournament. Meanwhile, Vieri has endured a difficult campaign for Inter Milan, but his penalty box presence and eye for goal will be heavily relied upon.

The hastily arranged friendly in Tunisia is the final chance for Trapattoni to take a look at the players likely to feature in Portugal, as many are in recovery mode.

Unlike the lead up to the World Cup, Italy have four weeks to prepare, and the early elimination of Italian clubs from European competitions may benefit the national side

ABSW Prediction: Semi Finals.

SQUAD LIST:

Gianluigi Buffon	goalkeeper	Juventus	26
Francesco Toldo	goalkeeper	Internazionale	32
Angelo Peruzzi	goalkeeper	Lazio	33
Christian Panucci	defender	AS Roma	31
Massimo Oddo	defender	Lazio	27
Giuseppe Favalli	defender	Lazio	32
Fabio Cannavaro	defender	Internazionale	30
Alessandro Nesta	defender	AC Milan	28
Matteo Ferrari	defender	Parma	24
Marco Materazzi	defender	Internazionale	27
Gianluca Zambrotta	defender	Juventus	27
Gennaro Gattuso	midfielder	AC Milan	26
Cristiano Zanetti	midfielder	Internazionale	27
Simone Perrotta	midfielder	Chievo	26
Andrea Pirlo	midfielder	AC Milan	25
Stefano Fiore	midfielder	Lazio	29
Mauro Camoranesi	midfielder	Juventus	27
Francesco Totti	striker	AS Roma	27
A Del Piero	striker	Juventus	29
Marco Di Vaio	striker	Juventus	27
Antonio Cassano	striker	AS Roma	21
Bernardo Corradi	striker	Lazio	28
Christian Vieri	striker	Internazionale	30

Spanish Primera Liga

Real Madrid's Luis Figo (right) fights for the ball against Real Sociedad's Bittor Alkiza.

Celta Vigo and Real Valladolid crashed out of the Primera Liga and Barcelona secured second spot despite a final day defeat.

Celta, who played in the Champions League this season, completed a woeful season with a 2-1 defeat at home to Real Mallorca.

In a frantic finish, Anderson Nene and Guillermo Pereyra gave Mallorca a 2-0 lead only for substitute Alejandro Jandro to net a late consolation.

Valladolid at least had the satisfaction of going out with a bang as they crushed Villarreal 3-0 with Jose Caminero adding to Roberto Losada's double.

At the final whistle, Valladolid's attention turned towards Catalonia as they then needed Espanyol to lose to already-relegated Murcia.

It wasn't to be, however, as second half goals from Raul Tamudo and Alberto Lopo gave the home side a 2-0 win.

At the top end of the table, Barcelona completed a remarkable turnaround by claiming automatic qualification to next season's Champions League despite going down 2-1 at Real Zaragoza.

Javier Saviola gave Barca a 10th-minute lead but mid-table Zaragoza hit back to claim an impressive scalp thanks to goals from Ruben Cani and Fernando Soriano.

Barca would have been overhauled if Real Madrid had beaten Real Sociedad at the Bernabeu.

But the home side's desperate recent run continued as the San Sebastian club notched an impressive 4-1 win, much to the fury of the Madrid crowd who witnessed their side suffer a club record fifth successive defeat.

Darko Kovacevic, Xavi Prieto and Oscar de Paula netted for the visitors as they surged into a 3-0 lead inside 32 minutes.

Luis Figo pulled one back from the penalty spot six minutes before half-time but Prieto netted his second, also from the spot, to give Sociedad maximum points.

Madrid, deposed as champions by Valencia, were booed from the pitch and it only seems a matter of time before the axe falls on coach Carlos Queiroz.

Walter Pandiani netted the only goal as Deportivo La Coruna rounded off another hugely encouraging season with a win at Racing Santander.

Trailing Malaga 2-0 at half-time, Betis fought back in the second half to grab a stunning last-gasp 3-2 victory when Daniel Dani fired home his second goal of the game in the 89th minute.

Dani had also started Betis' fightback, netting in the 62nd minute before team-mate Juanito drew the teams level at 2-2 with a goal in the 69th minute.

Atheltic Bilbao 3 Atletico Madrid 4, Celta Vigo 1 Real Mallorca 2, Espanyol 2 Murcia 0, Malaga 2 Real Betis 3, Santander 0 Deportivo Coruna 1, Real Madrid 1 Real Sociedad 4, Real Zaragoza 2 Barcelona 1, Sevilla 1 Osasuna 0, Valencia 0 Albacete 1, Valladolid 3 Villarreal 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 **Valencia**	**38**	**23**	**8**	**7**	**71**	**27**	**77**
2 Barcelona	38	21	9	8	63	39	72
3 Deportivo	38	21	8	9	60	34	71
4 Real Madrid	38	21	7	10	72	54	70
5 Athletic	38	15	11	12	53	49	56
6 Sevilla	38	15	10	13	56	45	55
7 Atlético	38	15	10	13	51	53	55
8 Villarreal	38	15	9	14	47	49	54
9 Betis	38	13	13	12	46	43	52
10 Málaga	38	15	6	17	50	55	51
11 Mallorca	38	15	6	17	54	66	51
12 Osasuna	38	11	15	12	38	37	48
13 Zaragoza	38	13	9	16	46	55	48
14 Albacete	38	13	8	17	40	48	47
15 Real Sociedad	38	11	13	14	49	53	46
16 Espanyol	38	13	4	21	48	64	43
17 Racing	38	11	10	17	48	63	42
18 Valladolid	38	10	11	17	46	56	41
19 Celta	38	9	12	17	48	68	39
20 Murcia	38	5	11	22	29	57	26

English FA Cup

Manchester United's deadly duo Cristiano Ronaldo (left) and Ruud van Nistelrooy hold aloft the FA Cup.

Manchester United salvaged an FA Cup success from their disappointing season as they eased to a 3-0 win over Millwall at Cardiff's Millennium Stadium.

The Nationwide One underdogs hardly tried to score in the opening half, preferring to defend deep and in numbers.

The plan proved highly effective and looked likely to set up a tense second period until Cristiano Ronaldo, comfortably the game's best player, broke the deadlock with a header on the stroke of half-time.

United were then able to control the second half and made sure of victory when Ruud van Nistelrooy scored a 65th-minute penalty after David Livermore had fouled Ryan Giggs.

Van Nistelrooy extended the lead to 3-0 on 80 minutes and the lack of competitive edge was illustrated by indulgent late subsitutions from both managers.

Sir Alex Ferguson secured final appearances for the recently dropped Roy Carroll, rehabilitated Ole Gunnar Solskjaer and soon-to-depart Nicky Butt while Dennis Wise made way for Curtis Weston to become the FA Cup final's youngest-ever player.

Ferguson hailed his team's attitude, saying: "It took us half an hour to start opening them up but with professional players you expect a professional performance.

"It's marvellous and I feel proud of everyone attached to the club."

Millwall player-boss Wise was predictably upset to lose.

He said: " My players have done very well but had we not gone in 1-0 down at half-time it might have been different.

"That goal killed us off. We made a mistake and we got punished."

Result
Manchester Utd 3 Millwall 0

ITALIAN SERIE B

Albinoleffe 2 Como 1, Avellino 3 Pescara 2, Bari 1 Catania 2, Fiorentina 2 Napoli 1, Genoa 4 Cagliari 2, Livorno 3 Torino 1, Messina 1 Palermo 1, Salernitana 2 Venezia 0, Ternana 2 Atalanta 1, Treviso 1 Vicenza 1, Triestina 1 Ascoli 1, Verona 3 Piacenza 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Palermo	**43**	**20**	**16**	**7**	**68**	**37**	**76**
2. Livorno	43	19	17	7	69	41	74
3. Cagliari	43	20	14	9	71	47	74
4. Messina	43	19	16	8	64	42	73
5. Atalanta	43	17	19	7	54	36	70
6. Fiorentina	43	18	15	10	50	44	69
7. Piacenza	43	17	16	10	44	38	67
8. Triestina	43	15	18	10	49	46	63
9. Ternana	43	16	14	13	55	47	62
10.Catania	43	17	11	15	50	52	62
11.Torino	43	13	17	13	54	49	56
12.Ascoli	43	13	16	14	47	48	55
13.Treviso	43	12	18	13	45	44	54
14.Vicenza	43	12	18	13	45	47	54
15.Napoli	43	10	23	10	33	41	53
16.Salernitana	43	14	11	18	35	50	53
17.Albinoleffe	43	13	13	17	41	52	52
18.Genoa	43	12	14	17	48	55	50
19.Venezia	43	11	15	17	37	50	48
20.Bari	43	12	10	21	48	59	46
21.Verona	43	10	14	19	46	62	44
22.Pescara	43	10	12	21	37	60	42
23.Avellino	43	8	13	22	49	62	37
24.Como	43	7	12	24	33	63	33

ENGLISH NATIONWIDE LEAGUES

Division One Play-offs

West Ham United will face Crystal Palace in an all-London first division playoff final at the Millennium Stadium after a 2-0 win over Ipswich Town put them through 2-1 on aggregate.

West Ham have the chance to bounce straight back into the premier league after second-half goals from midfielder Matthew Etherington and defender Christian Dailly gave them a deserved victory in a tough battle with their Suffolk visitors.

Palace reached the final after beating Sunderland 5-4 on penalties at the Stadium of Light despite a 2-1 defeat on the night that levelled the scores at 4-4 on aggregate.

Division Two Play-offs

Brighton will face off against Bristol City in the Division Two promotion final thanks to Adam Virgo's heroics against Swindon.

Virgo scored a goal which took Swindon to penalties at the Withdean Stadium deep into stoppage time before keeping his nerve to score again in the shoot-out as the Seagulls booked a trip to the Millennium Stadium.

Bristol ticket to the Millenium Stadium was stamped by Christian Roberts, his late strike securing a 3-2 aggregate win over Hartlepool at Ashton Gate.

With the scores locked at 1-1- in the third minute of six added on as stoppage time, Roberts advanced into the Hartlepool box to slot a sidefooted effort past goalkeeper Jim Provett.

Fixtures
West Ham vs Crystal Palace (May 29)
Brighton vs Bristol City (May 30)

UEFA CUP

Valencia defeated Marseille two nil with a double from Mista to help claim yet another title for the Spanish side aside from their Primera Liga success.

WORLD

French Ligue 1

Lyon celebrate winning the French Ligue 1 title after their victory over Lille 3-0.

Lyon wrapped up their third successive French title with a convincing 3-0 victory over Lille at a jubilant Stade Gerland.

Lyon produced a performance befitting the occasion with goals from Sidney Govou, Mahamadou Diarra and Peguy Luyindula securing the win.

Govou opened the scoring in the 39th minute, Diarra doubled the lead from the penalty spot six minutes after the break before Luyindula made it 3-0 in the 71st minute.

Paris St Germain avoided having to qualify for next season's Champions League as their 1-0 victory at Bastia ensured the capital club finished the Ligue 1 season as runners-up.

Portugal striker Pedro Pauleta netted the only goal on the hour mark.

Monaco finished third after snatching a 3-1 victory at Bordeaux. The hosts went ahead after 14 minutes, midfielder Albert Riera volleying home a fine cross by Pascal Feindouno, but the visitors hit back immediately through Emmanuel Adebayor.

Monaco wrapped up victory after the interval thanks to goals by Lucas Bernardi and Shabani Nonda within two minutes.

Nantes picked up an impressive final day 3-1 victory over Sochaux as they made sure of sixth place in the Ligue 1 table.

The visitors, who finished fifth, were ultimately undone by a lacklustre first half performance which saw them go in 2-0 down at the break.

At the other end of the table Le Mans and Guingamp were relegated to the second division, joining Montpellier who were already down before the final day of the season.

Le Mans suffered the drop despite beating Lens 3-0 while Guingamp, who started the day clear of the drop zone, were relegated after they lost 2-1 at Marseille and Ajaccio won 3-1 at home to Metz thanks to a Bernard Diomede hat-trick.

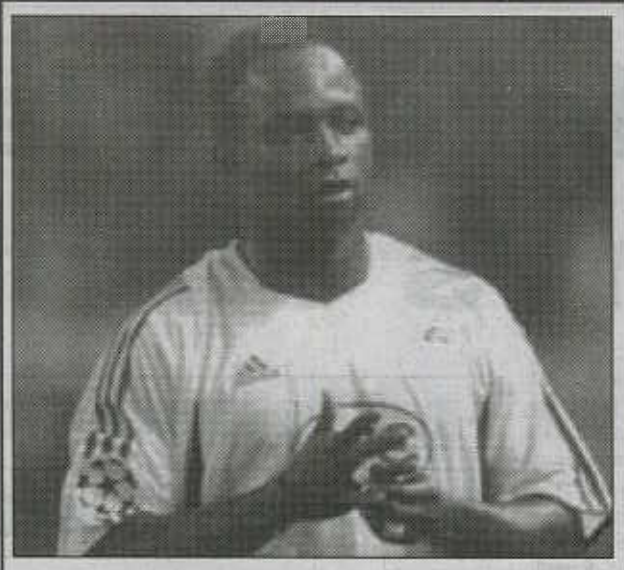
Montpellier slipped out of Ligue 1 in typically dismal fashion with a heavy 0-4 defeat at Rennes.

Two goals from top-scorer Alexander Frei, one from Lamine Diatta and a late strike by Jimmy Briand set up an easy win for the hosts.

Bordeaux 1 Monaco 3, Lyon 3 Lille 0, Marseille 2 Guingamp 1, Bastia 0 Paris St Germain 1, Nice 1 Auxerre 1, Nantes 3 Sochaux 1, Le Mans 3 Lens 0, Ajaccio 3 Metz 1, Rennes 4 Montpellier 0, Strasbourg 0 Toulouse 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1Lyon	**38**	**24**	**7**	**7**	**64**	**26**	**79**
2PSG	38	22	10	6	50	28	76
3Monaco	38	21	12	5	59	30	75
4Auxerre	38	19	8	11	60	34	65
5Sochaux	38	18	9	11	54	42	63
6Nantes	38	17	9	12	47	35	60
7Marseille	38	17	6	15	51	45	57
8Lens	38	15	8	15	34	48	53
9Rennes	38	14	10	14	56	44	52
10Lille	38	14	9	15	41	41	51
11Nice	38	11	17	10	42	39	50
12Bordeaux	38	13	11	14	40	43	50
13Strasbourg	38	10	13	15	43	50	43
14Metz	38	11	9	18	34	42	42
15Ajaccio	38	10	10	18	33	55	40
16Toulouse	38	9	12	17	31	44	39
17Bastia	38	9	12	17	33	49	39
18Guingamp	38	10	8	20	36	58	38
19Mans	38	9	11	18	35	57	38
20Montpellier *	38	8	7	23	41	74	31

Greek Ethniki Katigoria



Emmanuel Olisadebe scored the title-winning goal for Panathinaikos.

Panathinaikos ended Olympiakos' seven-year reign as Greek champions by completing a domestic double with a 1-0 victory that relegated Paniliakos.

Having seen Olympiakos dominate since their last title victory in 1995/96, a spell which included several last-day deciders, Panathinaikos finally took their championship tally to 19 as just as against PAOK and Proofeftiki, Emmanuel Olisadebe came on as substitute to score the winner.

His 76th-minute solo effort relieved the tension ten minutes after Dimitrios Papadopoulos had headed on to the post. Panaliakos join Proodeftiki in relegation, allowing Akratitos to survive, despite a 3-1 defeat at Halkidona. However, Akratitos do now take on Ergotelis in a play-off.

Olympiakos did beat UEFA Cup-bound Egaleo 3-1, Marcin Kuzba scoring twice in the second half after Giovanni's league leading 21st goal of the season was cancelled out by Anestis Agritis. But just as Panathinaikos beat Olympiakos in the Greek Cup final, so again the recent title-monopolisers missed out.

However, they will again enter the UEFA Champions League, as will PAOK. They had already sealed third place, and today drew 1-1 with neighbours Aris Thessaloniki. Lampros-Charalampos Vangelis put PAOK into the lead with a long-range effort, but their goalkeeper Kostas Andriopoulo was dismissed soon after for handball outside the area, and Aris leveled just before the hour through Giorgos Koussas.

The final UEFA Cup berth was clinched by Panionios, their second consecutive qualification. Evanggelos Mantzios, Cristian Pino and Nikolaos Mitrou scored in a 3-1 win against bottom side Proodeftiki, to stay against of Halkidona.

However, Halkidona, who finished seventh in their first season after promotion, may yet enter the UEFA Cup as AEK Athens, who overcame their off-field problems to prevail 3-1 at Kallithea and finish fourth, were denied the necessary license by the Hellenic Football Federation due to debts.

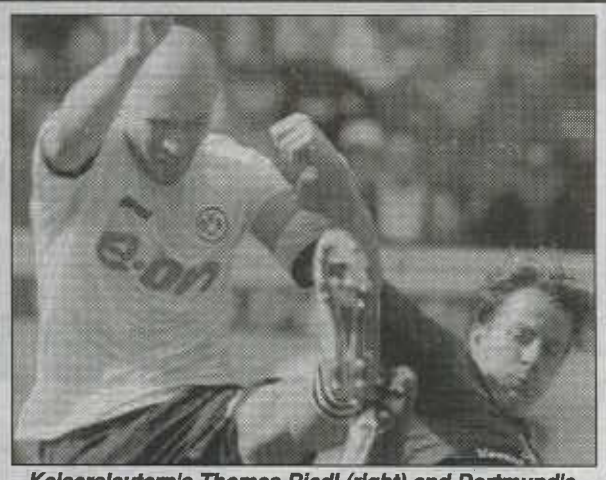
AEK have until 31 May to appeal, but if that fails Halkidona will make their European bow.

Elsewhere, eight-placed Iraklis won 1-0 at Xanthi thanks to a last-gasp goal from Pantelis Kapetanos - who was set up by his brother Kostas - while Nikos Froussos scored twice to give Ionikos a top-ten place with a 2-1 victory at OFI Crete.

Aris 1 PAOK 1, Halkidona 3 Akratitos 1, Kallithea 1 AEK Athens 3, OFI Crete 1 Ionikos 2, Olympiakos 3 Egaleo 1, Paniliakos 0 Panathinaikos 1, Panionios 3 Proodeftiki 1, Xanthi 0 Iraklis 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1Panathinaikos	**30**	**24**	**5**	**1**	**62**	**18**	**77**
2Olympiakos	30	24	3	3	70	19	75
3PAOK	30	18	6	6	47	27	60
4AEK	30	16	7	7	57	32	55
5Egaleo	30	15	7	8	37	26	52
6Panionios	30	12	11	7	40	29	47
7Halkidona	30	13	6	11	40	39	45
8Iraklis	30	12	6	12	40	39	42
9Ionikos	30	9	6	15	33	43	33
10Xanthi	30	8	6	16	28	42	30
11OFI	30	7	8	15	27	44	29
12Kallithea	30	5	12	13	37	42	27
13Aris	30	7	6	17	24	46	27
14Akratitos	30	5	8	17	31	69	23
15Paniliakos	30	4	9	17	28	56	21
16Proodeftiki	30	4	8	18	26	56	20

German Bundesliga



Kaiserslautern's Thomas Riedl (right) and Dortmund's Dede fight for the ball.

Bayern Munich gave coach Ottmar Hitzfeld a winning send-off by beating Freiburg 2-0 in the last match of what has been a disappointing season.

The Bavarians thus finish second behind champions Werder Bremen and qualify automatically for the Champions League.

Sebastian Deisler scored the opener before victory was sealed by a penalty from French defender Bixente Lizarazu who is also leaving the club.

Bayer Leverkusen beat Stuttgart 2-0 to clinch third spot and a place in the Champions League qualifiers.

Dimitar Berbatov and Bernd Schneider sealed victory for Bayer.

Champions Bremen continued to fall apart with a 3-1 defeat at Hansa Rostock.

Werder defender Mladen Krstajic was on target at both ends after Rade Prica gave the hosts the lead. Marcus Lantz's late penalty sealed the win.

At the other end of the table 1860 Munich and Eintracht Frankfurt will join an already relegated Cologne in the second division next year.

Frankfurt were condemned to relegation when they lost 2-1 at Hamburg.

Ioannis Amanatidis gave the strugglers an early lift when he put them ahead after 26 minutes, but just a minute later Mehdi Mahdavikia restored parity for Klaus Toppmoller's men.

Sergej Barbarez's second-half goal sealed Frankfurt's fate.

1860 Munich dropped out of the German top-flight after a 3-1 defeat against 10-man Borussia Moenchengladbach.

Kaiserslautern secured their place in the Bundesliga with a gritty 1-1 draw that also denied Borussia Dortmund a place in the UEFA Cup.

Vratislav Lokvenc scored for Lautern before his fellow Czech Jan Koller restored parity for the visitors.

Wolfsburg and Schalke ended a disappointing season for both clubs with a 1-1 draw.

Miroslav Karhan gave Wolfsburg a fourth-minute lead before an own goal from Maik Franz ensured honours were shared.

Bochum sealed their place in the UEFA Cup with a 3-1 win against Hannover.

Thomas Christiansen equalised Peter Madsen's opener for Bochum but goals from Paul Freier and Frank Fahrenhorst completed the job.

Cologne's last top-flight match for the foreseeable future was a 3-1 defeat at Hertha Berlin.

Marcelinho's penalty put Berlin ahead but then Lukas Podolski equalised. Fredi Bobic and Rafael Nando secured victory for the capital club.

Hamburg 2 Eintracht Frankfurt 1, Bayern Munich 2 Freiburg 0, Hansa Rostock 3 Werder Bremen 1, Hertha Berlin 3 Cologne 1, Bochum 3 Hanover 1, Bayer Leverkusen 2 Stuttgart 0, Moenchengladbach 3 1860 Munich 1, Kaiserslautern 1 Borussia Dortmund 1, Wolfsburg 1 Schalke

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1Bremen	**34**	**22**	**8**	**4**	**79**	**38**	**74**
2Bayern	34	20	8	6	70	39	68
3Leverkusen	34	19	8	7	73	39	65
4Stuttgart	34	18	10	6	52	24	64
5Bochum	34	15	11	8	57	39	56
6Dortmund	34	16	7	11	59	48	55
7Schalke	34	13	11	10	49	42	50
8Hamburg	34	14	7	13	47	60	49
9Hansa	34	12	8	14	55	54	44
10Wolfsburg	34	13	3	18	56	61	42
11Moenchengladbach	34	10	9	15	40	49	39
12Hertha	34	9	12	13	42	59	39
13Freiburg	34	10	8	16	42	67	38
14Hannover	34	9	10	15	49	63	37
15Kaiserslautern	34	11	6	17	39	62	36
16Eintracht	34	9	5	20	36	53	32
171860 München	34	8	8	18	32	55	32
18Köln	34	6	5	23	32	57	23

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RETRAVISION

Retravision NSW Premier League Finals Series 2003/04

Referee Flags Crescent's Final Hopes

By Paul Goodwin

Sydney Crescent Star's sensational first season in the NSW Premier League came to a stunning halt at the Gabbie on Saturday night, when a shocking defensive blunder allowed Blacktown City to capitalise and blow the Star out of the finals.

But make no mistake, the win was not handed to them on a plate, and it was only the 73rd minute blunder by Vanja Ivesa that signalled the end to Crescent's prolific season.

In the early stages of the game Dane Hokin and Mark Milligan combined on the right and from the latter's cross Simon Catanzaro hit one wide from close range and the clock had barely ticked over for the first minute.

While sometimes the defence looked a little vulnerable to the fast counter-attack of Tolgay Ozbey and Hakan Sevgin, Blacktown coach Brian Brown soon fixed that by switching Damien Foxe to the centre where he could toughen the defence and allow Ben Willard and Hokin to do the work on the flanks.

In the 33rd the Crescent Star defence had its first real scare when Milligan and Adam Kwasnik converged on a high cross in the goalmouth and it needed some last ditch defending to save the day for the visitors. Star defender Ugur Tokdogan got flattened in a goalmouth melee soon afterwards and in the 36th Milligan's cross found the keeper struggling to claim the ball close to goal.

Collision course; players from Crescent and Blacktown clash

Blacktown broke the deadlock in the 44th minute when the ball was played in from the right flank by Kain Rastall. When the defence could not clear the ball any further than the edge of the box Josh Maguire, waiting just outside it, let fly with a volley that saw the ball fly into the top left corner of Vanja Ivesa's net.

It left the Star players without any answer before half time; but they came back firing on all guns after the break.

Crescent Star brought on exciting midfielder Terry Atsas in place of youngster Gokce Oncu and they began to look like getting a better grip in the centre of the park. Rather than, one goal down, pulling up the defensive wall, they looked to attack as much as possible and did so largely through the skilful feet of Atsas.

This meant that the Demons themselves could take advantage of having more space and they caused a number of concerns to their opponents in this way. Soon after the restart Catanzaro forced a great reflex save from Star keeper Ivesa whose push away at the near post prevented a near certain second goal.

Then in the 49th Milligan found Adam Kwasnik on the left but the striker could only fire just wide.

Catanzaro and Milligan also went close around the hour mark, but there was a moment when the Demons could have thought their lead might not last much longer.

Paul Karbon's clearance after a Crescent Star attack saw the ball at the feet of Angelo Petratos whose booming shot looked to be going under John Crawley's crossbar until the expert keeper managed to tip the ball over the bar with a great save.

This was the 56th minute, but another attack saw the home defence again under huge pressure eight minutes later when Joe Bruni's cross from the right was narrowly nodded over the bar by Tolgay Ozbey from close range.

Crescent Star were just beginning to look as if they might claw their way back into the game when in the 73rd minute Ivesa blundered badly.

Blacktown elbowed their way past Crescent in the race for the Grand Final

He had collected the ball and waited to distribute it, moving to the edge of the penalty area before rolling the ball out to a defender. Unfortunately for his team he has also stepped outside the bounds of his area and assistant referee Atila Stibinger duly raised his flag.

It meant a free kick at the edge of the area for Blacktown who had Rastall, Catanzaro and Hokin all standing around the ball. Eventually it was played by Catanzaro to Rastall who laid it back for Hokin to deliver a rasping, low drive that found its way into the bottom right corner of the net.

Crescent Star fought on well and had several chances to break back but that second goal had appeared to have really hurt.

Substitute Juan Arango had livened things up a bit when he arrived on the scene in the 71st minute and got through to face Crawley in the 81st only to shoot wide, while moments later Ozbey was able to get on the end of a good pass from fellow striker Sevgin, only to also miss the target.

In the 84th Blacktown's defence was fully stretched when Tokdogan sent over a well placed cross intended for Sevgin lurking in the middle, but Karbon saw the danger and cut the ball out before it could reach the Star player.

That was about the end of the Crescent Star challenge and the Demons almost got a third goal in the 85th when Luke Roodenburg broke on the left with Kwasnik in support only to angle a shot just wide of the right hand upright.

It was a solid win by the Demons who were without Tony Faria and who had Pat Gatt on the bench after being unable to train until late in the week.

The game was played in a good, competitive fashion and the only real excitement for the fans of Crescent Star had come before ball had even been kicked.

Blacktown City Demons	Perfection	2
Sydney Crescent Star		0

Fatal fault: despite having a consistent season, Vanja Ivesa's 73rd minute mistake may well have cost Crescent Star the game

BLACKTOWN CITY DEMONS 2
(J Maguire 44', D Hokin 80')
SYDNEY CRESCENT STAR 0
at Gabbie Stadium, Seven Hills

BLACKTOWN CITY DEMONS: John Crawley (C), Ben Willard, Damien Foxe, Paul Karbon, Dane Hokin, Mark Milligan (Brian Vanega 63), Simon Catanzaro (Patrick Gatt 87), Kane Rastall, Josh Maguire, Luke Roodenburg, Adam Kwasnik
Sub not used: RGK Brody Crane, Bishara Stephan and Stephen Kayes
Coach: Brian Brown

SYDNEY CRESCENT STAR: Vanja Ivesa, Evangelos Petratos, Ersin Avni, Askin Oygur, Gokce Oncu (Terry Atsas 46), Ugur Tokdogan, Joe Bruni, Yavus Ekinci (C), Shane Hammond (Juan Arango 71), Tolgay Ozbey, Hakan Sevgin
Subs not used: RGK Wojtek Zarzycki, Michael Cindric and Mustafa Akca
Coach: Yasin Ozdenak

Yellow Cards: Blacktown City: Damien Foxe 25, Paul Karbon 70; Sydney Crescent Star: Joe Bruni 30
Referee: Ray Isaac
Assistant Referees: Atila Stibinger and Nick Radic
Fourth Official: Greg Leadbeatter

WRITERS: Greg Stock, Paul Goodwin, Aimee Brown
PRODUCTION: Mary Quartly
EDITOR: Dylan Welch
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Kyle Patterson
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● *All information is courtesy of SOCCER NSW*

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RETRAVISION

Retravision NSW Premier League Finals Series 2003/04

Patient Bankstown sink sorry Saints

By Greg Stock

St George looked quite the sorry Saints on the weekend, disposed of by a patient Bankstown offence.

A goal in each half was enough to get the Lions over the line as they defended stoutly inside a frenzied last five minutes to secure the win and set up a meeting with Belconnen in Canberra next weekend.

Without the injured Milan Bosnar and Anthony Doumanis, Lions coach Andy Papoulias again went to veteran midfielder Saso Boskovski to partner George Nohra in the midfield, and the move paid off handsomely.

Both players were heavily involved in the opening twenty minutes as Bankstown pressed hard to get the early break, which came via the unlikely feet of Richard Luksic. When Lukic was pushed forward for a free kick just outside the penalty box, he put away a failed clearance from the Saints Dean Culina that sent the Bankstown fans into rapturous applause.

Lacking any real urgency during the opening period of the match, the Saints suddenly found inspiration when the scoreboard read 1-0. With Raphael Bove filling the void in the middle of the park - left vacant by the suspended Gabriel Mendez - they were unlucky not to go to the break at least on level terms after dominating possession for a solid fifteen minutes.

Bove himself missed a shot on a tight angle in the 19th minute before Stuart Young had his header turned around the post by Zlatko Josevski a minute before the break. In the second half the momentum was clearly with the home side, and if not for some exceptional defending from Luksic and Matthew Pressello, matched equally with some acrobatic goalkeeping from Zlatko Josevski, the Lions could have been in serious trouble.

Young in the 47th minute again had a header denied brilliantly by Josevski before his partner Bruno Beddoni inexplicably missed a free header from the edge of the six-yard box.

The inability of the Saints forward to find an equaliser kept the door open for the Lions to find a second and in the 80th minute they did exactly that. With Sean Babic and Matthew Borg well held for most of the afternoon it was the Lions forgotten man Marc Hoenselaars that stepped up just when his side needed him the most.

After a solid game on the left side of midfield, Hoenselaars went forward for a Nohra free kick and calmly found the net from a tightish angle. Left unmarked at the back post, both he and Dimitri Nicoloau could have raffled the shot, after the Saints defenders failed to mark up in sufficient numbers as the free kick took a heavy deflection and fell to the feet of the tall marksman

Despite Ante Deur putting away an 85th minute goal following a goalmouth scramble and setting up a grandstand finish, the result never really seemed in question, despite the Saints dominance of field position and possession.

With Beddoni looking in some discomfort from a knee injury and Young heavily marked, their avenues to goal were limited by some ruthless and well organised Bankstown defence that kept their shape nicely and were almost unbeatable in the air.

After dominating the first fifteen minutes they were prepared to go back into their shell, be patient and wait for opportunities as the home side tried to engineer a fight back. Unlike Lions sides of the past, their defence held the key and under some often relentless pressure came out with its newfound reputation enhanced.

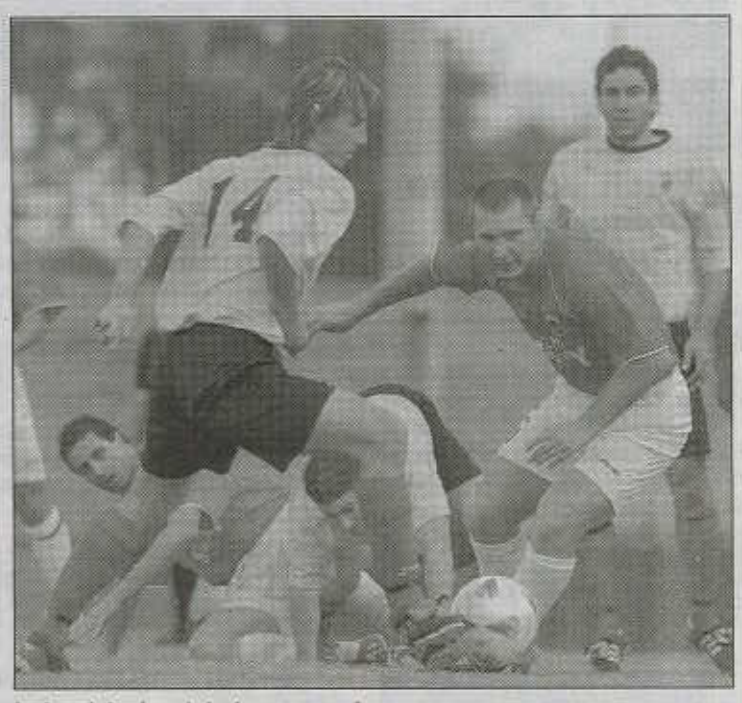
"We were expecting St George to sit back for the first fifteen or twenty minutes and that's exactly how the game panned out," Bankstown City coach Andy Papoulias said, "we wanted to score first and we did that and we were always mindful of the need to defend in numbers and keep our shape and that's exactly what the boys did. St George really had us up against it, especially in the first half, but I am very proud of the way the boys held firm and were patient in scoring that second goal."

While the Lions have set up a meeting with Minor Premiers Belconnen next weekend, the Saints have their season on the line when they take on Blacktown City in the Minor Semi Final.

Coach Manny Spanoudakis is hoping that his team can bounce back after a disappointing performance. "Our first quarter of an hour was poor and it set the tone for us," Spanoudakis said, "we came back and dominated the later stages of the first half but we were always chasing the game and we found that tough.

"The boys have to understand that this is Semi Final football and you can't go to sleep and expect not to get punished. Full credit to Bankstown, they were patient and played to their strengths and got the result."

St George Saints		1
Bankstown City Lions	HYUNDAI	2



(Clockwise from left) Firing squad: Saints defenders line up to defend against a George Nohra free kick; Hurly burly: Sasha Trajcevski dashes past Stuart Young; Flying high: Vince Savoca uses Nohra as a springboard to success

ST GEORGE SAINTS 1
(A Deur 85')
BANKSTOWN CITY LIONS 2
(R Luksic 15', M Hoenselaars 80')
at St George Stadium, Rockdale

ST GEORGE SAINTS: Richard Patrizi, Simon Verrender, Mirko Jurilj, Dean Culina, Vince Savoca, Raphael Bove, Ante Deur, Ivan Zelic (Christian Cevenini 61'), Adrian Webster, Bruno Beddoni (James Kovas 76'), Stuart Young
Coach: Manny Spanoudakis

BANKSTOWN CITY LIONS: Zlatko Josevski, Paul Wearne, Richard Luksic, Matthew Presseilo, Saso Boskovski, Sean Babic, Sasha Trajcevski, George Nohra, Marc Hoenselaars (Alex Trpkoski 85'), Robbie Gomez (Dimitri Nicolaou 67'), Matthew Borg (Steve Liavas 76')
Coach: Andy Papoulias
Yellow Cards: Luksic (BC) 24' Zelic (STG) 32' Savoca (STG) 39' Borg (BC) 64' Webster (STG) 64' Verrender (STG) 78' Nohra (BC) 84'
Referee: Srebre Delovski
Assistant Referees: Jose De Silva and Kurt Ams
Fourth Official: Peter Apostolou

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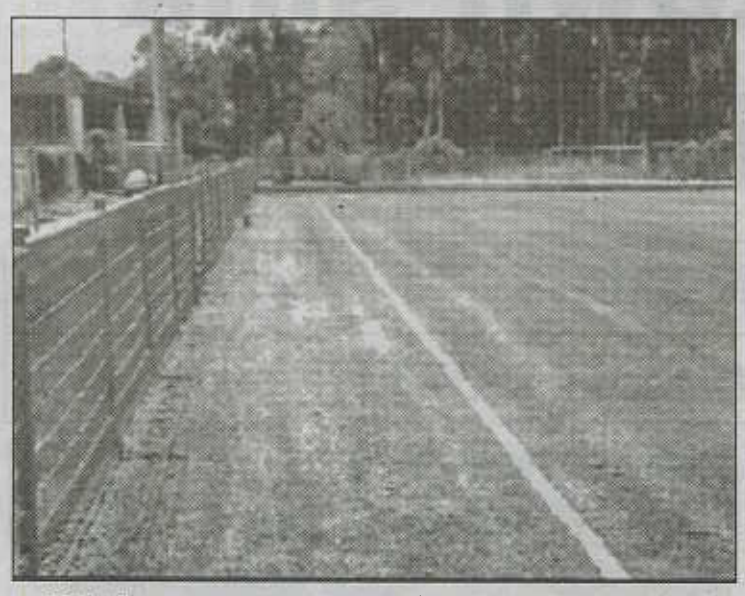
FROM THE SIDELINES

WITH GREG STOCK



Wish you were here ...

A postcard from the United States hit the FTS desk last week from former Northern Tigers goalkeeper Chris Sharpe.

Apart from passing on his best wishes to his former teammates, he reports that he is enjoying the challenge of playing full time despite the cooler weather in Vermont.

"The standard of coaching is great," Sharpe said, "our Captain/Coach is an ex-pro player in Switzerland and here in the US for Cleveland Crunch, and our Owner/Coach is Bojan Vuckovic, ex Serbian & Monternegro international and New England Revolution in the US, so they really know there stuff. I get Goalkeeper training at every session and we go before practice then just join the squad, with weights in the morning, so its a good setup."

To St George fans the knees pictured above may well be the key to the Saints Finals chances. They are, as you may have guessed, attached to Bruno Beddoni. Nursing a knee injury from a couple of weeks back, Beddoni's ability to play in the upcoming elimination final against Blacktown could make the difference for the Saints.

Coventry Carl

Stanmore Hawks boss Sotiri Mavros has moved swiftly to bolster his playing roster this week after moving back to the top of the table with wins over Sydney University and Ryde City.

Mavros has agreed to terms with former Coventry City defender Carl Nolan and has former Sydney Olympic goalkeeper Glenn Moss joining the club after his commitments with the New Zealand national team have concluded.

"Carl is an excellent defender but he is a little short of condition so we'll be bringing him through the under-20's first," Mavros said.

The Hawks boss handed a debut to 24 year-old goalkeeper Hamish McLeod in their clash with University last Wednesday night at Lambert Park. McLeod filled in for Con Anastasiadis who was injured in a training mishap on the Tuesday night.

According to our spies, McLeod had an inspired match and may well have been the difference between the two teams.

Signings

Other clubs in the midst of a midseason recruiting drive include Manly-Warringah Dolphins, Fairfield Bulls, MSC Liverpool and Fraser Park Dragons.

Dolphin's boss Phil Moss has agreed to terms with Bonnyrigg midfielder Bradley Groves and A.P.I.A. Leichhardt striker James Monie.

Fairfield Bulls have signed David Harding while MSC Liverpool has acquired the services of Paul Bourke and David Gardiner. Fraser Park coach Ian Gillan has countered with the signings of Bonnyrigg's Greg Collins, Parramatta Power's Jack Sobczyk and former Sydney Olympic defender come mid-fielder Ante Juric.

The battle of the chequebook is really gaining momentum, or maybe it's just that the players are feeling the bite of the mini budget?

Lost and not found

Lost dogs, purses, mobile phones, even bags sure, but lost players? Please. FTS had a call from a rather distressed Super League coach last week, looking for his star striker whom he has not seen in weeks.

If anyone does find him, feel free to point him in the direction of a phone so his club can find out if he is still breathing.

Vic goes sic

Sutherland coach Vic Ellul had a topsy turvy Saturday night if ever there was one. With five minutes remaining of his sides clash with Dulwich Hill, young midfielder Daniel Wilson found the net to give the Sharks an unassailable 4-1.

Jumping around like a two-year-old to celebrate an impending victory Ellul suddenly feinted, causing his bench to fear the worse.

The ambulance was called and arrived on the scene making its way across the Seymour Shaw turf to the coach's bench where Ellul was being treated.

After being taken to Sutherland Hospital he was released later that evening following precautionary observation.

It could have been a very serious situation, but thankfully it was averted by some quick thinking club officials who treated the stricken coach before the ambulance arrived.

We wish Vic all the best this week, though we might suggest next time he keeps his victory celebration to something a little more docile; a party popper perhaps?

Night of Nights

The prestigious Premier League Gold Medal Dinner has been set for the Sarah Grand Ballroom at Le Montage in Leichhardt.

This year's bonanza of celebrities is set to be the best yet, and although Beckham and Ronaldo have yet to RSVP, we still expect the night to be a roaring success.

FINALS FLASHBACK

How times change! Five years ago the NSW Premier League didn't exist and the State's elite competition was played in winter.

In this Finals Flashback, we spin the clock back to 1999 to the NSW Super League.

The top five teams qualified for the finals.

In the Elimination Final, this was the outcome

PARRAMATTA EAGLES 3
BANKSTOWN CITY LIONS 0

That was the end of the campaign for Bankstown. In the Qualifying Final, this was the outcome

BLACKTOWN CITY DEMONS 3
MACARTHUR RAMS 1

These impressive wins for Parramatta Eagles and Blacktown were highly significant. Both went on to reach the Grand Final, after then minor premiers Bonnyrigg White Eagles lost two finals games in a row (2-5 v Blacktown in Major Semi & 2-3 v Parramatta Eagles in Preliminary Final).

In the Grand Final, this was the result

BLACKTOWN CITY DEMONS 5
PARRAMATTA EAGLES 1

Next week, our Finals Flashback will look at the 2000 season, the last winter season before summer soccer.

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RETRAVISION

Retravision NSW Premier League Finals Series 2003/04

MAJOR SEMI-FINAL

Blue Devils Fit and Firing

By Paul Goodwin

Belconnen Blue Devils Vs Bankstown City Lions
Saturday 29th May, McKellar Soccer Stadium, 5pm

The McKellar Soccer Centre plays host to the Major Semi Final this season for the first time and surprisingly it will be Bankstown City Lions and not St George who will be playing Belconnen.

Bankstown won that right fair and square with a disciplined performance against home side St George last Sunday afternoon and Blue Devils' coaching team of Chris Tanzey and Oscar Langone were there to see it happen, having driven up from Canberra for the occasion.

The Belconnen team had not played a competitive game for two weeks when they took on the AIS on the previous Friday and Tanzey rotated his full squad in a match that was practice and nothing more; the 5-5 score line testament to the fact.

"We were very grateful for the three week break before our own semi-final game," Tanzey said, "every member of my squad has been in trouble with injuries at one stage or another this season and the last few weeks it was a real struggle getting a fit team on the park.

"All the boys are fit now and it is largely down to our physio that they have remained competitive week in week out, despite carrying knocks."

Ed Hollis, who is also the Rugby League team, Canberra Raiders physio, who was with Tanzey at the Institute and with the Matildas when he coached them too, has been the man entrusted with the task of bringing the best out of the players.

Having clinched the Premiership at their last home game the Canberra side is now looking to advance to the Grand Final, further sparing the players any more injury doubts and giving them all another week off.

Andy Papoulias, the Bankstown City Lions' mentor, has his own ideas about that. The Lions are taking buses to Canberra for their supporters to enjoy the game and having seen them boost the size of the crowd at the St George Stadium considerably there is no reason why they cannot turn out in numbers down in the nation's capital as well.

Papoulias has no injury worries going into the game.

The same cautious and disciplined approach he has adopted thus far is likely to again be deployed at McKellar with his main strike force of Matt Borg and Sean Babic ready to fire.

Both players have a fine understanding together and with Marc Hoenselaars also sitting just in behind them and players like George Nohra creating things in the middle, there really is no reason why the Lions cannot be the first side into the Grand Final on June 13.

Toughened by regular trial game during the campaign against Parramatta Power and some great work between the posts by Zlatko Josevski, the Bankstown's defence, so suspect in past seasons, looked solid. Even with key defenders like Milan Bosnar and Paul Wearne missing.

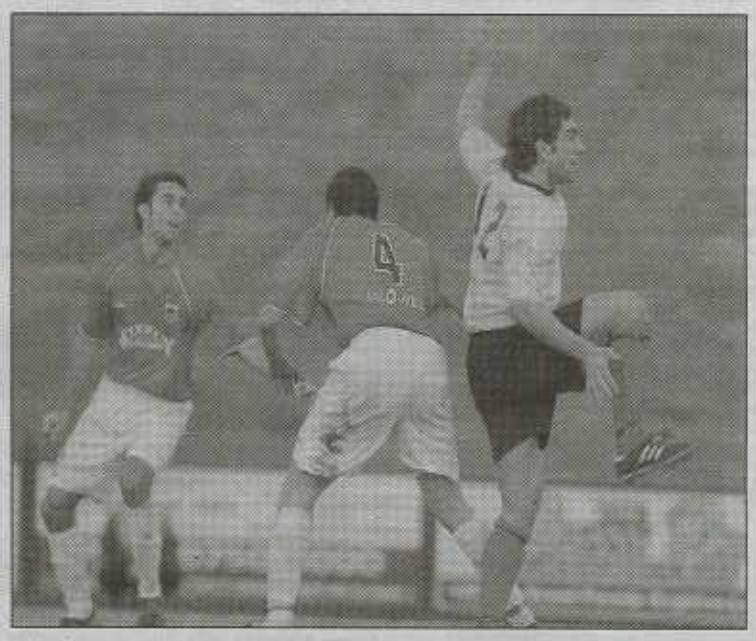
Bosnar and diminutive midfielder Anthony Doumanis will both miss the rest of the season but Warne should be on deck for this important match.

It was Warne and Luksic who stood out at the back, against St George, even though the side had many other players who stood up to be counted.

Important Belconnen players like Oscar Zamora and Elliot Zwangobane will be in fine fettle to take on the Lions and with Mike Katz and David Arranz also back to fitness there is every reason for optimism in the Blue Devils' camp.

So with both sides at full strength it should be an epic encounter Belconnen completed a double over the Lions during the season proper with a tight 2-1 win at McKellar and 2-0 at Jensen Park.

Since Bankstown went into the game at St George with a similar kind of record, two 2-0 losses, that form can be discounted.



Balancing act: Bankstown players such as George Nohra will be the key to a Lions berth in the 2003/04 Premier League grand final

ELIMINATION SEMI FINAL

Saints teeter on the edge of Finals oblivion

By Paul Goodwin

St George Saints Vs Blacktown City Demons
Sunday 30th May, St George Stadium, 3pm

The Saints, whose season has gone off the rails a little in the run home, face Blacktown City for the right to stay in the Finals' race.

The clash at St George Stadium should be a close one and given that the Saints' suspended skipper, Gabriel Mendez, will once again be out of the picture the Demons must fancy their chances.

St George fought back hard against Bankstown in a vain attempt to pull back the two goals they had conceded, one in each half, but did look strong as the game came to its conclusion, despite only managing to score one of those they needed to take the game into extra time.

In Stuart Young and Bruno Beddoni, the Saints still have one of the most potent and experienced strike duos in the League.

They have not really fired for some time now, though, which must be worrying for coach Manny Spanoudakis.

"Against Bankstown we failed to concentrate in the opening part of the game and we were punished defensively. We were very disappointing and we must improve if we are to beat Blacktown," he said.

St George seem to be trouble free players when it comes to injuries; only Beddoni, still carrying an inured knee, can be considered in any doubt.

Blacktown, who have been improving in recent weeks and peaking at the right time, like Bankstown, look in good shape for this encounter. They don't have Marcus Phillips, but Pat Gatt should be available for selection and Mark Milligan, who had to come off against Crescent Star after a heavy knock, should also be fine to play this weekend.

The Demons' big loss has been wide man Tony Faria, who had been hospitalised during the week leading up to the Crescent Star game.

"Tony was a sick boy," Blacktown coach Brian Brown said, "he had a collapsed lung and we can only hope that he will be back to play for us this weekend."

The loss of Faria would be a blow as he has been so explosive and dangerous since joining the club, again, this season.

There really is no ready replacement, as Faria offers a dimension that few clubs can provide; electrifying speed, a great shot and close ball skills.

With or without Faria Blacktown should still be the team to beat.

They gained revenge for an early season 1-0 loss at The Gabbie by inflicting a shock 4-1 defeat on the Saints a few weeks back and will have no fear of returning to the Rockdale ground for this showdown.

The game seems evenly poised. Luke Roodenburg and Adam Kwasnik will lead the Demons' attack, once more and this pairing could be good enough to prise open the Saints' defence. The form of Josh Maguire has been a key factor in the Demons' season and his goal against Crescent Star was a super strike.

"Josh has had a great season for us," Brown said after the former Central Coast man's goal had helped sink Crescent Star, "he has been in great touch all season and I am very happy with what he has done for us already."

So with Maguire and Simon Catanzaro doing much of the creative work and Milligan pushing forward as well, we can expect to see the Saints' defence fully stretched.

It is going to be a really close one here and the Saints, having missed the minor Premiership by a whisker, won't give up the chance of winning the Grand Final so easily.

Faria offers a dimension that few clubs can provide; electrifying speed, a great shot and close ball skills

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PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE: RESCHEDULED GAMES: ROUND 1:

GRADE 13: Central Coast FC 2 Gladesville Spirit SC 3. **GRADE 14:** Central Coast FC 1 Gladesville Spirit SC 2. **GRADE 15:** Central Coast FC 0 Gladesville Spirit SC 0. **GRADE 16:** Central Coast FC 2 Gladesville Spirit SC 2. **GRADE 18:** Central Coast FC 1 Gladesville Spirit SC 3.

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE - ROUND 13:

GRADE 13: Central Coast FC 1 Macarthur Rams 0, Wollongong Wolves 2 Newcastle United 2, Marconi Stallions 1 Bankstown City Cubs 1, Sydney United 2 Hajduk Wanderers United 0, Parramatta Eagles 2 APIA Leichhardt Tigers 0, Sydney Olympic 1 Sutherland Shire Sharks 1, Gladesville Spirit SC 1 Blacktown City Demons 4.

GRADE 14: Central Coast FC 0 Macarthur Rams 3, Wollongong Wolves 3 Newcastle United 1, Marconi Stallions 2 Bankstown City Cubs 2, Sydney United 1 Hajduk Wanderers United 3, Parramatta Eagles 0 APIA Leichhardt Tigers 0, Sydney Olympic 1 Sutherland Shire Sharks 1, Gladesville Spirit SC 0 Blacktown City Demons 1.

GRADE 15: Central Coast FC 2 Macarthur Rams 2, Wollongong Wolves 0 Newcastle United 3, Marconi Stallions 0 Bankstown City Cubs 1, Sydney United 5 Hajduk Wanderers United 0, Parramatta Eagles 2 APIA Leichhardt Tigers 0, Sydney Olympic 2 Sutherland Shire Sharks 0, Gladesville Spirit SC 2 Blacktown City Demons 0.

GRADE 16: Central Coast FC 1 Macarthur Rams 2, Wollongong Wolves 3 Newcastle United 3, Marconi Stallions 0 Bankstown City Cubs 1, Sydney United 2 Hajduk Wanderers United 0, Parramatta Eagles 2 APIA Leichhardt Tigers 0, Sydney Olympic 1 Sutherland Shire Sharks 2, Gladesville Spirit SC 0 Blacktown City Demons 1.

GRADE 18: Central Coast FC 1 Macarthur Rams 2, Wollongong Wolves 3 Newcastle United 0, Marconi Stallions 3 Bankstown City Cubs 1, Sydney United 0 Hajduk Wanderers United 1, Parramatta Eagles 2 APIA Leichhardt Tigers 2, Sydney Olympic 0 Sutherland Shire Sharks 1, Gladesville Spirit FC 1 Blacktown City Demons 2.

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 13

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Blacktown City	13	9	1	3	38	12	26	28
Parramatta Eagles	13	8	4	1	25	4	21	28
Sydney United	13	9	1	3	32	13	19	28
Hajduk Wanderers	13	8	1	4	16	11	5	25
Marconi Stallions	13	7	2	4	27	17	10	23
Bankstown City	13	7	2	4	20	13	7	23
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt	13	6	3	4	17	14	3	21
Gladesville Spirit SC	13	6	1	6	26	28	-2	19
Sydney Olympic	13	5	2	6	13	16	-3	17
Newcastle Utd FC	13	3	4	6	16	23	-7	13
Wollongong Wolves	13	2	5	6	12	20	-8	11
Central Coast Utd	13	3	1	9	7	19	-12	10
Sutherland Shire	13	2	3	8	9	29	-20	9
Macarthur Rams	13	1	0	12	6	45	-39	3

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 14

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Blacktown City	12	9	2	1	27	7	20	29
Marconi Stallions	13	8	4	1	37	9	28	28
Parramatta Eagles	13	8	3	2	19	6	13	27
Gladesville Spirit SC	13	8	3	2	14	7	7	27
Wollongong Wolves	12	8	1	3	24	13	11	25
Bankstown City	13	5	4	4	17	16	1	19
Sydney Olympic	13	4	5	4	15	9	6	17
Newcastle Utd FC	13	4	5	4	16	17	-1	17
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt	13	3	4	6	13	20	-7	13
Sutherland Shire	13	3	3	7	20	17	3	12
Hajduk Wanderers	13	2	6	5	17	20	-3	12
Sydney United	13	3	1	9	10	24	-14	10
Macarthur Rams	13	2	3	8	12	35	-23	9
Central Coast Utd	13	0	2	11	7	48	-41	2

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 15

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Marconi Stallions	13	10	2	1	21	6	15	32
Parramatta Eagles	13	10	1	2	25	4	21	31
Sydney Olympic	13	9	2	2	27	14	13	29
Blacktown City	13	8	1	4	28	15	13	25
Gladesville Spirit	13	6	4	3	20	11	9	22
Central Coast Utd	13	6	4	3	17	18	-1	22
Newcastle Utd FC	13	6	2	5	22	15	7	20
Bankstown City	13	4	3	6	8	12	-4	15
Macarthur Rams	13	4	3	6	15	28	-13	15
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt	13	2	6	5	8	12	-4	12
Sydney United	13	3	2	8	13	19	-6	11
Wollongong Wolves	13	1	6	6	11	20	-9	9
Sutherland Shire	13	0	5	8	9	21	-12	5
Hajduk Wanderers	13	1	1	11	6	35	-29	4

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 16

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Parramatta Eagles	13	9	2	2	22	10	12	29
Bankstown City	13	7	3	3	22	11	11	24
Marconi Stallions	13	6	4	3	18	11	7	22
Sydney United	13	7	1	5	20	17	3	22
Sydney Olympic	13	6	3	4	18	10	8	21
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt	13	6	3	4	16	14	2	21
Gladesville Spirit	13	5	5	3	14	11	3	20
Wollongong Wolves	13	4	6	3	17	14	3	18
Blacktown City	13	4	6	3	13	12	1	18
Sutherland Shire	13	5	1	7	16	18	-2	16
Newcastle Utd FC	13	4	4	5	18	21	-3	16
Macarthur Rams	13	3	3	7	16	21	-5	12
Hajduk Wanderers	13	1	3	9	8	29	-21	6
Central Coast Utd	13	0	4	9	9	28	-19	4

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 18

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Marconi Stallions	13	9	3	1	28	11	17	30
Blacktown City	13	8	0	5	22	14	8	24
Sutherland Shire	12	7	2	3	25	13	12	23
Wollongong Wolves	12	7	2	3	23	13	10	23
Sydney Olympic	13	7	2	4	36	27	9	23
Gladesville Spirit	13	7	1	5	22	19	3	22
Parramatta Eagles	13	6	3	4	27	21	6	21
Hajduk Wanderers	13	6	1	6	22	24	-2	19
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt	13	5	3	5	19	28	-9	18
Sydney United	13	4	4	5	21	18	3	16
Macarthur Rams	13	4	2	7	21	33	-12	14
Bankstown City	13	2	3	8	12	28	-16	9
Newcastle Utd FC	13	2	1	10	15	32	-17	7
Central Coast Utd	13	1	3	9	16	28	-12	6

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE COMBINED

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pts
Parramatta Eagles	65	41	13	11	118	45	73	136
Marconi Stallions	65	40	15	10	131	54	77	135
Blacktown City	64	38	10	16	128	60	68	124
Gladesville Spirit	65	32	14	19	96	76	20	110
Sydney Olympic	65	31	14	20	109	76	33	107
Bankstown City	65	25	15	25	79	80	-1	90
Wollongong Wolves	63	22	20	21	87	80	7	86
Sydney United	65	26	9	30	96	91	5	87
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt	65	22	19	24	73	88	-15	85
Newcastle Utd FC	65	19	16	30	87	108	-21	73
Sutherland Shire	64	17	14	33	79	98	-19	65
Hajduk Wanderers	65	18	12	35	69	119	-50	66
Macarthur Rams	65	14	11	40	70	162	-92	53
Central Coast Utd	65	10	14	41	56	141	-85	44

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE - ROUND 11:

GRADE 13: Fairfield Bulls 1 Parramatta Star 4, Bonnyrigg White Eagles 1 Northern Tigers 0, Fraser Park - Canterbury 1 Hills United 1, St George 1 Schofields Scorpions 0, Penrith Nepean United 0 Granville Rage 0, Manly Warringah Dolphins 5 Southern Branch 0.

GRADE 14: Fairfield Bulls 1 Parramatta Star 1, Bonnyrigg White Eagles 1 Northern Tigers 1, Fraser Park - Canterbury 0 Hills United 2, St George 1 Schofields Scorpions 1, Penrith Nepean United 1 Granville Rage 0, Manly Warringah Dolphins 3 Southern Branch 1.

GRADE 15: Fairfield Bulls 1 Parramatta Star 3, Bonnyrigg White Eagles 1 Northern Tigers 2, Fraser Park - Canterbury 0 Hills United 2, St George 1 Schofields Scorpions 2, Penrith Nepean United 0 Granville Rage 0, Manly Warringah Dolphins 0 Southern Branch 3.

GRADE 16: Fairfield Bulls 1 Parramatta Star 1, Bonnyrigg White Eagles 0 Northern Tigers 1, Fraser Park - Canterbury 3 Hills United 1, St George 3 Schofields Scorpions 1, Penrith Nepean United 3 Granville Rage 0, Manly Warringah Dolphins 2 Southern Branch 0.

GRADE 18: Fairfield Bulls 0 Parramatta Star 0, Bonnyrigg White Eagles 1 Northern Tigers 1, Fraser Park - Canterbury 2 Hills United 2, St George 4 Schofields Scorpions 1, Penrith Nepean United 3 Granville Rage 0, Manly Warringah Dolphins 1 Southern Branch 1.

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 13

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Manly Warringah	11	10	0	1	31	5	26	30
Parramatta Star	11	7	2	2	23	12	11	23
St George	11	7	0	4	19	13	6	21
Bonnyrigg WE	11	6	2	3	15	8	7	20
Southern Branch	11	6	2	3	20	17	3	20
Granville Rage	11	5	4	2	14	8	6	19
Penrith Nepean	11	5	3	3	13	10	3	18
Fraser Pk - C'bury	11	3	3	5	14	20	-6	12
Northern Tigers	11	3	0	8	10	20	-10	9
Hills United	11	2	2	7	13	20	-7	8
Schofield Scorpions	11	2	1	8	7	18	-11	7
Fairfield Bulls	11	0	1	10	6	34	-28	1

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 14

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Manly Warringah	11	8	1	2	20	9	11	25
St George	11	7	3	1	28	8	20	24
Schofield Scorpions	11	7	2	2	20	12	8	23
Bonnyrigg WE	11	5	4	2	18	10	8	19
Penrith Nepean	11	5	4	2	15	8	7	19
Granville Rage	11	4	1	6	11	12	-1	13
Fairfield Bulls	11	3	3	5	10	12	-2	12
Hills United	11	3	2	6	15	17	-2	11
Fraser Pk - C'rbury	11	2	5	4	6	16	-10	11
Northern Tigers	11	2	4	5	11	22	-11	10
Southern Branch	11	1	5	5	8	18	-10	8
Parramatta Star	11	0	4	7	8	26	-18	4

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 15

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Northern Tigers	11	9	2	0	19	5	14	29
Penrith Nepean	11	7	2	2	24	10	14	23
Bonnyrigg WE	11	7	1	3	23	7	16	22
Schofield Scorpions	11	7	1	3	20	10	10	22
St George	11	6	1	4	18	12	6	19
Southern Branch	11	6	0	5	21	19	2	18
Hills United	11	5	2	4	19	17	2	17
Parramatta Star	11	3	3	5	15	20	-5	12
Fraser Pk - C'bury	11	3	3	5	11	16	-5	12
Granville Rage	11	3	1	7	13	19	-6	10
Manly Warringah	11	2	0	9	7	26	-19	6
Fairfield Bulls	11	0	0	11	9	38	-29	0

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 16

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Manly Warringah	11	8	0	3	18	6	12	24
St George	11	7	2	2	23	9	14	23
Fairfield Bulls	11	5	3	3	19	10	9	18
Penrith Nepean	11	5	3	3	20	13	7	18
Parramatta Star	11	5	2	4	17	14	3	17
Bonnyrigg WE	11	5	2	4	20	18	2	17
Schofield Scorpions	11	5	2	4	21	20	1	17
Hills United	11	4	1	6	19	26	-7	13
Granville Rage	11	4	1	6	14	21	-7	13
Northern Tigers	11	3	3	5	12	17	-5	12
Southern Branch	11	2	2	7	13	25	-12	8
Fraser Prk - C'bury	11	1	3	7	6	23	-17	6

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 18

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Parramatta Star	11	8	1	2	41	14	27	25
Fairfield Bulls	11	6	3	2	25	13	12	21
Manly Warringah	11	5	5	1	21	12	9	20
Northern Tigers	11	6	1	4	16	14	2	19
St George	11	5	3	3	18	22	-4	18
Hills United	11	5	2	4	19	17	2	17
Schofield Scorpions	11	5	2	4	25	25	0	17
Bonnyrigg WE	11	5	1	5	23	26	-3	16
Southern Branch	11	4	3	4	19	20	-1	15
Penrith Nepean	11	4	0	7	19	21	-2	12
Fraser Pk - C'bury	11	0	3	8	13	29	-16	3
Granville Rage	11	0	2	9	11	37	-26	2

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE COMBINED

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
St George	55	32	9	14	106	64	42	105
Manly Warringah	55	33	6	16	97	58	39	105
Bonnyrigg WE	55	28	10	17	99	69	30	94
Penrith Nepean	55	26	12	17	91	62	29	90
Schofield Scorpions	55	26	8	21	93	85	8	86
Parramatta Star	55	23	12	20	104	86	18	81
Northern Tigers	55	23	10	22	68	78	-10	79
Southern Branch	55	19	12	24	81	99	-18	69
Hills United	55	19	9	27	85	97	-12	66
Granville Rage	55	16	9	30	63	97	-34	57
Fairfield Bulls	55	14	10	31	69	107	-38	52
Fraser Pk - C'bury	55	9	17	29	50	104	-54	44

DIVISION ONE YOUTH LEAGUE - ROUND 11:

GRADE 13: Bathurst 75 Western 2 Rockdale City Suns 0, Mt Druitt Town Rangers 1 Dulwich Hill 0, Sydney Uni Eastern Lions 1 Ryde City 1, Hurstville City Minotaurs 2 Belmore Hercules 4, Camden Tigers 1 Wollongong United 4.

GRADE 14: Bathurst 75 Western 2 Rockdale City Suns 1, Mt Druitt Town Rangers 1 Dulwich Hill 0, Sydney Uni Eastern Lions 2 Ryde City 1, Hurstville City Minotaurs 0 Belmore Hercules 2, Camden Tigers 4 Wollongong United 3.

GRADE 15: Bathurst 75 Western 2 Rockdale City Suns 0, Mt Druitt Town Rangers 0 Dulwich Hill 1, Sydney Uni Eastern Lions 0 Ryde City 2, Hurstville City Minotaurs 1 Belmore Hercules 0, Camden Tigers 2 Wollongong United 1.

GRADE 16: Bathurst 75 Western 2 Rockdale City Suns 0, Mt Druitt Town Rangers 3 Dulwich Hill 0, Sydney Uni Eastern Lions 2 Ryde City 3, Hurstville City Minotaurs 2 Belmore Hercules 1, Camden Tigers 3 Wollongong United 2.

GRADE 18: Bathurst 75 Western 3 Rockdale City Suns 0, Mt Druitt Town Rangers 2 Dulwich Hill 2, Sydney Uni Eastern Lions 0 Ryde City 3, Hurstville City Minotaurs 3 Belmore Hercules 1, Camden Tigers 18 Wollongong United 0.

DIVISION ONE YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 13

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Wollongong United	10	9	0	1	29	2	27	27
Camden Tigers	10	5	3	2	31	8	23	18
Belmore Hercules	10	5	2	3	20	13	7	17
Bathurst '75/West	10	5	2	3	17	15	2	17
SU Eastern Lions	10	4	4	2	18	14	4	16
Mt Druitt Town Ran	10	4	3	3	11	13	-2	15
Dulwich Hill	10	4	2	4	21	17	4	14
Rockdale City Suns	10	3	3	4	7	10	-3	12
Ryde City	10	3	1	6	11	30	-19	10
Hurstville City Min	10	2	2	6	12	23	-11	8
Stanmore Hawks	10	0	0	10	8	40	-32	0

DIVISION ONE YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 14

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Bathurst '75/West	10	9	1	0	23	4	19	28
Belmore Hercules	10	8	1	1	20	2	18	25
Mt Druitt Town Ran	10	6	2	2	14	5	9	20
SU Eastern Lions	10	4	2	4	10	10	0	14
Ryde City	10	4	2	4	11	12	-1	14
Rockdale City Suns	10	3	4	3	11	9	2	13
Camden Tigers	9	4	1	4	13	13	0	13
Hurstville City Min	9	2	3	4	3	9	-6	9
Dulwich Hill	10	2	2	6	8	15	-7	8
Wollongong United	10	2	1	7	11	18	-7	7
Stanmore Hawks	10	0	1	9	6	33	-27	1

DIVISION ONE YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 15

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
SU Eastern Lions	10	8	0	2	20	5	15	24
Ryde City	10	7	2	1	20	8	12	23
Rockdale City Suns	10	5	2	3	15	13	2	17
Wollongong United	10	5	1	4	25	18	7	16
Dulwich Hill	10	4	4	2	12	9	3	16
Bathurst '75/West	10	4	3	3	20	11	9	15
Hurstville City Min	9	4	2	3	17	10	7	14
Camden Tigers	9	4	0	5	14	16	-2	12
Belmore Hercules	10	3	1	6	8	25	-17	10
Mt Druitt Town Ran	10	2	0	8	10	15	-5	6
Stanmore Hawks	10	0	1	9	6	37	-31	1

DIVISION ONE YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 16

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Dulwich Hill	10	7	1	2	29	12	17	22
Hurstville City Min	9	6	2	1	18	9	9	20
Belmore Hercules	10	5	2	3	17	12	5	17
Camden Tigers	8	4	4	0	16	8	8	16
Wollongong United	10	4	4	2	16	10	6	16
Bathurst '75/West	10	4	3	3	16	12	4	15
Rockdale City Suns	9	4	2	3	13	14	-1	14
Mt Druitt Town R	10	3	1	6	9	13	-4	10
Ryde City	10	2	2	6	13	20	-7	8
Stanmore Hawks	10	1	2	7	9	29	-20	5
SU Eastern Lions	10	1	1	8	12	29	-17	4

DIVISION ONE YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 18

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Ryde City	10	8	1	1	37	8	29	25
Camden Tigers	9	7	0	2	42	9	33	21
Stanmore Hawks	10	6	2	2	33	11	22	20
Dulwich Hill	10	6	2	2	31	15	16	20
Bathurst '75/West	10	5	3	2	20	16	4	18
Hurstville City Min	9	5	1	3	29	10	19	16
SU Eastern Lions	10	4	0	6	23	24	-1	12
Mt Druitt Town R	10	2	3	5	16	22	-6	9
Belmore Hercules	10	2	2	6	18	34	-16	8
Rockdale City Suns	10	1	2	7	32	34	-2	5
Wollongong United	10	0	0	10	6	104	-98	0

DIVISION ONE YOUTH LEAGUE COMBINED

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pts
Bathurst '75/West	50	27	12	11	96	58	38	93
Camden Tigers	45	24	8	13	116	54	62	80
Dulwich Hill	50	23	11	16	101	68	33	80.
Ryde City	50	24	8	18	92	78	14	80.
Belmore Hercules	50	23	8	19	83	86	-3	77
Hurstville City Min	46	19	10	17	79	61	18	67
SU Eastern Lions	50	21	7	22	83	82	1	70
Wollongong United	50	20	6	24	87	152	-65	66.
Rockdale City Suns	49	16	13	20	78	80	-2	61.
Mt Druitt Town R	50	17	9	24	60	68	-8	60
Stanmore Hawks	50	7	6	37	62	150	-88	27

***S.S.I.* YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 11:**

GRADE 12: UNSW 0 Blacktown Districts 3, Northern Tigers 0 North West Sydney Koalas 2, Sutherland Association 2 Southern Branch 0, Macarthur Rams 5 Wollongong Wolves 1, Marconi 0 Manly Warringah Dolphins 1, St George Association 1 Central Coast FC 0.

GRADE 14: UNSW 1 Blacktown Districts 2, Northern Tigers 0 North West Sydney Koalas 2, Sutherland Association 1 Southern Branch 0, Macarthur Rams 3 Wollongong Wolves 0, Marconi 0 Manly Warringah Dolphins 1, St George Association 1 Central Coast FC 1.

GRADE 16: UNSW 0 Blacktown Districts 7, Northern Tigers 0 North West Sydney Koalas 7, Sutherland Association 0 Southern Branch 3, Macarthur Rams 1 Wollongong Wolves 0, Marconi 0 Manly Warringah Dolphins 4, St George Association 3 Central Coast FC 0.

***S.S.I.* GIRLS YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 12**

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Manly Warringah	10	9	0	1	28	3	25	27
Nepean Association	10	8	1	1	28	13	15	25
Sutherland Asso	10	8	0	2	36	7	29	24
NWSydney Koalas	10	7	1	2	32	12	20	22
St George Asso	10	5	2	3	15	10	5	17
Macarthur Rams	10	4	3	3	18	16	2	15
UNSW	10	4	1	5	15	19	-4	13
Blacktown Assoc	10	3	3	4	17	20	-3	12
Central Coast Utd	10	3	1	6	12	14	-2	10
Northern Tigers	11	2	3	6	12	31	-19	9
Marconi Stallions	10	1	4	5	12	27	-15	7
Southern Branch	11	1	2	8	4	20	-16	5
Wollongong Wolves	10	0	1	9	9	46	-37	1

***S.S.I.* GIRLS YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 14**

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
St George Asso	10	8	2	0	40	8	32	26
Manly Warringah	10	8	2	0	22	1	21	26
Macarthur Rams	10	8	0	2	27	9	18	24
NWSydney Koalas	10	7	2	1	26	7	19	23
Nepean Association	10	6	1	3	25	8	17	19
Sutherland Assoc	10	5	2	3	15	4	11	17
Southern Branch	11	4	1	6	14	23	-9	13
Central Coast Utd	10	3	3	4	15	17	-2	12
Marconi Stallions	10	1	4	5	7	24	-17	7
Northern Tigers	11	2	1	8	4	28	-24	7
Wollongong Wolves	10	1	2	7	2	18	-16	5
Blacktown Assoc	10	1	2	7	2	21	-19	5
UNSW	10	0	2	8	4	35	-31	2

***S.S.I.* GIRLS YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 16**

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Southern Branch	11	10	0	1	55	6	49	30
NW Sydney Koalas	10	8	1	1	41	14	27	25
Macarthur Rams	10	8	1	1	30	11	19	25
Manly Warringah	10	6	2	2	43	16	27	20
Nepean Association	10	6	1	3	36	17	19	19
Sutherland Asso	10	5	2	3	18	10	8	17
Blacktown Asso	10	4	0	6	22	26	-4	12
St George Asso	10	4	0	6	20	28	-8	12
Central Coast Utd	10	3	2	5	15	18	-3	11
Marconi Stallions	10	3	1	6	16	22	-6	10
Wollongong Wolves	10	2	1	7	11	31	-20	7
Northern Tigers	11	1	1	9	4	48	-44	4
UNSW	10	0	0	10	4	68	-64	0

attack METROPOLITAN LEAGUE: ROUND 7:

GRADE 11: Canterbury Association 2 Central Coast Association 0, Eastern Suburbs Association 0 Nepean Association 3, Manly Warringah Association 3 Granville Association 0, Gladesville Hornsby Association 0 Ku-ring-gai Association 0, Bankstown Association 0 Blacktown Association 5, Southern Districts 1 Illawarra Association 3, Southern Branch 0 Macarthur Association 1.

GRADE 12: Canterbury Association 0 Central Coast Association 1, Eastern Suburbs Association 0 Nepean Association 2, Manly Warringah Association 1 Granville Association 1, Gladesville Hornsby Association 1 Ku-ring-gai Association 0, Bankstown Association 0 Blacktown Association 3, Southern Districts 2 Illawarra Association 1, Southern Branch 0 Macarthur Association 1.

attack UNDER 11 METROPOLITAN LEAGUE NORTHERN CONFERENCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Nepean	7	5	0	2	14	8	6	15
Granville	7	4	2	1	13	6	7	14
Gl'ville-Hornsby	7	3	3	1	11	10	1	12
Canterbury	7	3	2	2	11	10	1	11
Manly-Warringah	7	3	1	3	14	10	4	10
Ku-Ring-Gai	7	1	4	2	7	9	-2	7
Central Coast	7	2	0	5	8	13	-5	6
Eastern Suburbs	7	0	2	5	4	16	-12	2

attack UNDER 11 METROPOLITAN LEAGUE SOUTHERN CONFERENCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Southern Districts	7	5	1	1	18	5	13	16
Blacktown	7	5	0	2	20	6	14	15
Sutherland	6	5	0	1	11	7	4	15
Illawarra	6	3	1	2	11	8	3	10
St George	6	2	1	3	8	8	0	7
Macarthur	7	2	1	4	5	9	-4	7
Southern Branch	7	1	1	5	4	17	-13	4
Bankstown	6	0	1	5	1	18	-17	1

attack UNDER 12 METROPOLITAN LEAGUE NORTHERN CONFERENCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Gl'ville-Hornsby	7	6	1	0	15	2	13	19
Manly-Warringah	7	2	4	1	13	9	4	10
Nepean	7	2	3	2	7	4	3	9
Central Coast	7	2	3	2	7	11	-4	9
Ku-Ring-Gai	7	2	2	3	5	9	-4	8
Canterbury	7	2	1	4	5	12	-7	7
Eastern Suburbs	7	1	3	3	11	12	-1	6
Granville	7	1	3	3	5	9	-4	6

attack UNDER 12 METROPOLITAN LEAGUE SOUTHERN CONFERENCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Blacktown	7	7	0	0	27	2	25	21
Bankstown	6	3	2	1	9	5	4	11
Macarthur	7	3	1	3	7	8	-1	10
St George	6	3	0	3	7	7	0	9
Southern Districts	7	2	3	2	4	10	-6	9
Illawarra	6	2	0	4	7	11	-4	6
Sutherland	6	1	2	3	4	8	-4	5
Southern Branch	7	1	0	6	3	17	-14	3

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Bulls ram Macarthur

By Greg Stock

HAJDUK WANDERERS 0 SYDNEY UNIVERSITY 3

Following their midweek loss to Stanmore in the deferred game few would have given Sydney University a chance against high riding Hajduk Wanderers at Hajduk Stadium.

They would be wrong as the students went two goals up inside the first ten minutes and never looked back.

A jubilant Stewart Porter reflected on the ironies of the game; no Tim Wilson, injured and out of the game, no Andy Christie, already back in Scotland and a general lack of depth that meant the coach only had eleven men in contention for spots in his side.

Josh Sama, was brought into the side and he scored the opening goal using his burly frame to push past a couple of defenders.

So often the man to thank in recent seasons for his goal scoring and general leadership of the team, Rob Smithies got the second goal when he outpaced a sluggish defence and then netted nicely.

Midway through the second half Smithies proved too much of a handful for the Hajduk defence and was brought down in the box, earning a penalty which he converted as confidently as always.

SUTHERLAND 4 - DULWICH HILL 1

At Seymour Shaw Park Sutherland put paid to free spending Dulwich Hill's hopes of making much of an impact on the competition this round.

They beat the Arlington Oval side 4-1 in a drama packed encounter. Adam Kurtz took over in goal from Nathan Hughes and had a blinder, saving many efforts by a determined Dulwich strike force headed by Steve 'goal a game' Karavatakis.

Anthony Sarmonikas, Stewart Van Bentum and Iain Macdonald had the Sharks three nil up by the 70th minute when George Souris finally pulled one back for Dulwich. Unfortunately when Daniel Wilson gave Sutherland a fourth goal that assured the home side of a certain win, the Sutherland coach, Vic Ellul, collapsed after falling badly on his leg in celebration of the final goal.

Vic was taken to hospital and the game had to be held up while an ambulance was called which had to gain access by driving across the pitch.

FAIRFIELD BULLS 4 - MACARTHUR RAMS 1

Macarthur Rams growing reputation as top five material suffered a beating on Sunday afternoon with Hugh McCrory's Fairfield Bulls securing their first win in three starts 4-1.

With new signing David Harding on song the home side started off brightly when Harding netted from amongst a sea of players in the 6th minute.

But seven minutes later the Rams responded against the run of play via the right foot of Andrew Borg.

With the game deadlocked at half time Bulls coached pulled a couple of positional changes and introduced Javier Mancino into the centre of the park.

The move paid off in spades with Kory Babington scoring the sides second three minutes after the resumption before Leigh Gunn scored a brace in the 65th and 68th minutes.

Gunn's second goal was pure class as he met a Harding cross on the run from just inside the area and deftly flicked it across the face of goal to beat an outstretched Philip Zabaks at the back post. A goal of undoubted class.

The win sees Fairfield remain a solitary point behind fifth spot in the race for the top five.

HURSTVILLE ZSC 2 - MSC LIVERPOOL 0

MSC Liverpool coach Paul Carter's season of frustration continues after his team let Hurstville slide off the hook in a physical encounter at the Sydney Croatian Sports Centre.

After starting off strongly, Liverpool fell asleep at the twenty minute mark and allowed Hurstville to open up a well deserved 2-0 lead at the break.

Anthony Jusic and lightweight striker Eddie Adam both scored goals, with Adam missing the chance to take his side to an unassailable 3-0 lead just short of the interval when he brilliantly rounded goalkeeper Steve Minovski but let his shot inexplicably sail wide.

In the second half, the match was all Liverpool as Hurstville set about the task of defending their 2-0 lead. With Richard Plesa leading the way with a solid contribution at the back, Liverpool blew any number of ways to convert a glut of possession into goals.

Claudio Oricchio got their only goal in the 65th minute with a superb right foot strike, but Ben Realph and Sam Gewargis missed golden chances.

The result continues Hurstville's good form and leaves MSC coach Paul Carter's tearing his hair out yet again.

MANLY-WARRINGAH 2 - NORTHERN TIGERS 1

Blown up in the local Manly press during the week, the 'northern derby' produced an exciting encounter made famous more of it's second half physicality's than brilliant football.

Manly scored two goals in two minutes early in the first half to set up the win, with Micky Williams again leading the way with a brilliant first half contribution.

Damien Rosenthal scored the first goal when he put away a cross from Brent Fisher after good lead up work from Brad Groves, before Fisher got goal number two from a free kick that was flicked on by new Manly signing James Monie.

With Williams falling victim to a foot injury at half time Manly restructured their midfield pushing Groves into the centre of the park. The Tigers used their physical size to intimidate Manly and with Michael Mouyes and Marcus Frost up front leading the way set up a goal for Eric Paartalu in the 54th minute.

Despite a grandstand finish when they pushed numbers forward inside the last fifteen minutes the Tigers were unable to find an equalizer, the three points leaving Manly well entrenched in second spot.

HUSRTVILLE CITY MINOTAURS 1 - FRASER PARK 2

Ian Gillan's Fraser Park returned to the winners circle for the first time in a month defeating a Minotaurs side that struggled to make much of an impression in a lifeless contest at the Rockdale Ilinden Sports Centre.

Fraser Park scored two first half goals via new signing Jack Sobczyk who made his run-on debut since rejoining the club from NSL club side Parramatta Power.

Marino Musumeci breathed some late life into the match when he and Dimitri Zakilas combined well to manufacture a goal fifteen minutes from time, but the Dragons were equal to the task and defended stoutly to secure the points.

STANMORE HAWKS 3 - RYDE CITY 1

The Gunners started the game against first placed Stanmore in brilliant fashion with a 2nd minute goal by makeshift striker Simon Turner.

Playing up front with Greg Fuchs, the Ryde skipper slipped cunningly behind the Hawks defence at a free kick and in a one-on-one with the keeper slotted the ball away.

Just one minute later the Hawks had almost bitten back when Formeroo Pablo Cardozo sent a free kick to former NSL stalwart Scott Baillie but his header went centimetres over the crossbar.

It was another free kick in the 7th minute that brought Ryde undone with Cardozo again delivering a perfect ball, this time to Omar Obeid, who headed so forcefully that Tony Petrovski in the Ryde goal could only palm it up and into the roof of the net.

Three minutes later it was individual skill by Cardozo that crafted a goal from nothing, when he turned outside the goal area and placed the shot into the top right hand corner of the net.

Ryde came out fired up in the second half and closed down Stanmore, consistently frustrating their play, but despite this it was the Hawks with the 53rd minute goal when Maurice Soler hit an angled shot from 25m over Petrovksi and in.

In the 73rd minute a possible penalty to Greg Fuchs was turned down by experienced referee Matthew Breeze when Fuchs was up-ended in the box.

One expected that more goals would come but both teams played a fast containing game that sees the

WINTER SUPER LEAGUE - RESCHEDULED FROM ROUND 11:

FIRST GRADE: Sydney University 1 (R Smithies 58m) Stanmore Hawks 3 (D James 34m P Cardozo 41m O Obeid 88m). **GRADE 20:** Sydney University 1 Stanmore Hawks 0.

WINTER SUPER LEAGUE ROUND 12:

FIRST GRADE: Sutherland Shire Sharks 4 Dulwich Hill 1, Hajduk Wanderers United 0 Sydney University 3 (G Sama 13m R Smithies 21/76m penalty), Fairfield Bulls 4 (D Harding 6m K Babington 48m L Gunn 65/68m) Macarthur Rams 1 (A Borg 13m), Manly Warringah Dolphins 2 (D Rosenthal 16m B Fisher 18m) Northern Tigers 1 (E Paartalu 54m), Stanmore Hawks 3 (O Obeid 7m P Cardozo 29m M Soler 53m) Ryde City 1 (S Turner 2m), Hurstville ZSC 2 (A Jusic 32m E Adam 37m) MSC Liverpool 1 (C Oricchio 65m), Hurstville City Minotaurs 1 (M Musumeci 75m) Fraser Park Dragons 2 (J Sobczyk 15/28m).

GRADE 20: Sutherland Shire Sharks 2 Dulwich Hill 0, Hajduk Wanderers United 2 Sydney University 2, Fairfield Bulls 2 Macarthur Rams 1, Manly Warringah Dolphins 2 Northern Tigers 1, Stanmore Hawks 4 Ryde City 2, Hurstville ZSC 2 MSC Liverpool 3, Hurstville City Minotaurs 2 Fraser Park Dragons 3.

WINTER SUPER LEAGUE FIRST GRADE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Stanmore Hawks	12	8	2	2	24	11	13	26
Manly Warringah	12	8	0	4	16	10	6	24
Hajduk Wanderers	12	7	1	4	14	12	2	22
Macarthur Rams	12	6	3	3	27	20	7	21
Fraser Park	12	6	3	3	18	12	6	21
Fairfield Bulls	12	6	2	4	21	13	8	20
Hurstville ZSC	12	5	3	4	17	14	3	18
Sutherland Sharks	12	5	1	6	19	19	0	16
Sydney University	12	4	4	4	13	13	0	16
Hurstville City Min	12	4	3	5	16	18	-2	15
Northern Tigers	12	3	2	7	13	23	-10	11
M.S.C. Liverpool	12	3	1	8	14	19	-5	10
Dulwich Hill	12	3	0	9	15	28	-13	9
Ryde City	12	2	3	7	8	23	-15	9

WINTER SUPER LEAGUE GRADE 20

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Manly Warringah	12	11	1	0	43	10	33	34
Fraser Park	12	8	2	2	30	15	15	26
Hajduk Wanderers	12	7	2	3	25	16	9	23
Fairfield Bulls	12	7	2	3	26	19	7	23
Sutherland Sharks	12	7	1	4	20	12	8	22
Dulwich Hill	12	6	2	4	27	13	14	20
Northern Tigers	12	5	4	3	21	16	5	19
Macarthur Rams	12	5	0	7	18	21	-3	15
M.S.C. Liverpool	12	3	3	6	20	26	-6	12
Sydney University	12	3	2	7	13	21	-8	11
Hurstville City Min	11	3	1	7	9	30	-21	10
Stanmore Hawks	11	3	0	8	9	26	-17	9
Ryde City	12	2	2	8	10	29	-19	8
Hurstville ZSC	12	1	2	9	14	31	-17	

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION ONE - ROUND 13:

FIRST GRADE: Mt Pritchard 1 (N Rivera 52m) Schofields Scorpions 0, Liverpool Bossy 3 (M Damjanovic 42m L Carle 62/70m pen) Mt Druitt Town Rangers 1 (A Azzorpardi 87m), Nepean Association 2 (J Sciberras 61m G McPherson 89m) Wollongong United 1 (A Salim 87m), Bathurst 75 2 (D Baillie 8m B Stapley 76m) White City 1 (R Mandic 42m), Belmore Hercules 1 (P Paras 70m) Camden Tigers 0, The Wanderers 1 (O Valderrama 34m) Western Rage 7 (I Arrante 26m K Holbrook 31m S Chamings 46m P Pyliotis 62m M DAlessandro 65m G Wakim 80/83m), Fairfield City Lions 2 (U Ogmen 15m T Turegun 43m) Hills United 1 (J Miller 42m).

GRADE 20: Mt Pritchard 3 Schofields Scorpions 2, Liverpool Bossy 0 Mt Druitt Town Rangers 7, Nepean Association 3 Wollongong United 0 (win by forfeit), Bathurst 75 0 White City 3, Belmore Hercules 2 Camden Tigers 0, The Wanderers 3 Western Rage 3, Fairfield City Lions 1 Hills United 1.

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION ONE FIRST GRADE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Nepean Association	13	9	3	1	31	13	18	30
Wollongong United	13	9	1	3	31	10	21	28
Liverpool Bossy	13	8	2	3	30	20	10	26
Fairfield City Lions	13	7	4	2	30	23	7	25
Hills United	13	7	2	4	25	20	5	23
White City	13	7	1	5	23	17	6	22
Western Rage	13	6	3	4	35	25	10	21
Mt Pritchard	13	6	1	6	17	14	3	19
Bathurst '75	13	3	5	5	18	23	-5	14
The Wanderers	13	3	2	8	20	32	-12	11
Camden Tigers	13	2	5	6	12	27	-15	11
Belmore Hercules	13	2	4	7	11	24	-13	10
S'fields Scorpions	13	2	3	8	18	34	-16	9
Mt Druitt Town Ran	13	0	4	9	12	31	-19	4

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION ONE GRADE 20

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Nepean Association	13	11	1	1	31	12	19	34
Mt Pritchard	13	10	1	2	43	14	29	31
Western Rage	13	9	3	1	49	16	33	30
Mt Druitt Town Ran	13	8	2	3	33	13	20	26
S'fields Scorpions	13	7	2	4	25	18	7	23
Hills United	13	6	2	5	31	16	15	20
White City	13	5	3	5	32	36	-4	18
Camden Tigers	13	5	2	6	21	25	-4	17
The Wanderers	13	5	1	7	34	32	2	16
Bathurst '75	13	4	0	9	15	33	-18	12
Belmore Hercules	13	3	2	8	13	31	-18	11
Fairfield City Lions	13	2	4	7	20	31	-11	10
Liverpool Bossy	13	2	2	9	19	42	-23	8
Wollongong United	13	1	1	11	16	63	-47	4

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION TWO - ROUND 9:

FIRST GRADE: Blacktown Districts 1 (J Palumbo 27m) Springwood SC 0, Hawkesbury City 2 (J Chircop 65m T Monkerud 75m) Hakoah 1 (J Pillemer 25m), Auburn Stars 1 Inter Lions 3 (F Zarrella 31/88m A DOnofrio 50m), Greystanes SC 1 (A Eid 45m) Prospect United 2 (R Dunn 17/49m), Southern Star Sharks 2 (T Boustani 9m J McLeay 14m) UNSW 1 (J Byrne 32m).

GRADE 21: Blacktown Districts 3 Springwood SC 1, Hawkesbury City 1 Hakoah 1, Auburn Stars 2 Inter Lions 14, Greystanes SC 4 Prospect United 0, Southern Star Sharks 0 UNSW 8.

GRADE 19: Blacktown Districts 2 Springwood SC 3, Hawkesbury City 2 Hakoah 3, Auburn Stars 0 Inter Lions 12, Greystanes SC 4 Prospect United 0, Southern Star Sharks 0 UNSW 4.

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION TWO FIRST GRADE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Auburn Stars	8	5	2	1	17	8	9	17
Inter Lions	8	5	1	2	22	10	12	16
Blacktown Districts	8	5	1	2	16	13	3	16
Springwood	8	4	2	2	11	7	4	14
Hawkesbury City	8	2	5	1	13	12	1	11
S'thern Star Sharks	8	3	2	3	9	10	-1	11
Hakoah	8	3	1	4	13	17	-4	10
Prospect United	9	2	3	4	11	17	-6	9
Greystanes	8	2	2	4	10	13	-3	8
Greenisland SC	7	1	3	3	11	14	-3	6
UNSW	8	1	0	7	6	18	-12	3

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION TWO GRADE 21

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Inter Lions	8	5	1	2	28	11	17	16
UNSW	8	4	2	2	36	10	26	14
Springwood	8	4	2	2	17	9	8	14
Blacktown Districts	8	4	2	2	19	13	6	14
Hawkesbury City	8	3	4	1	20	8	12	13
Greystanes	8	3	4	1	14	8	6	13
Hakoah	8	3	4	1	13	9	4	13
Greenisland SC	7	3	0	4	16	15	1	9
Prospect United	9	2	2	5	15	27	-12	8
S'thern Star Sharks	8	1	3	4	13	24	-11	6
Auburn Stars	8	0	0	8	8	65	-57	0

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION TWO GRADE 19

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
UNSW	8	7	0	1	27	4	23	21
Inter Lions	9	6	0	3	34	11	23	18
Greenisland SC	8	6	0	2	23	12	11	18
Hakoah	8	5	1	2	22	14	8	16
Hawkesbury City	8	4	1	3	18	16	2	13
Prospect United	9	4	1	4	20	19	1	13
Blacktown Districts	8	3	1	4	14	17	-3	10
S'thern Star Sharks	8	2	2	4	11	16	-5	8
Springwood	8	2	1	5	7	16	-9	7
Greystanes	8	1	2	5	13	18	-5	5
Auburn Stars	8	0	1	7	4	50	-46	1

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION THREE - ROUND 9:

FIRST GRADE: Balmain SC 2 Sydney Cedars SC 1, Gazy Lansvale 1 Kellyville Kolts 2, Trasandinos 1 East Coast Magic 1, Earlwood Wanderers 4 New Sporting SCC 0, Gladesville United 3 Colo Colo 1, Roosters FC 3 Lithgow Workmen 3.

RESERVE GRADE: Balmain SC 2 Sydney Cedars SC 1, Gazy Lansvale 1 Kellyville Kolts 4, Trasandinos 1 East Coast Magic 0, Earlwood Wanderers 9 New Sporting SCC 0, Gladesville United 3 Colo Colo 3, Roosters FC 3 Lithgow Workmen 1.

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION THREE FIRST GRADE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
East Coast Magic	9	8	1	0	30	9	21	25
Balmain SC	9	7	0	2	27	13	14	21
Kellyville Kolts	9	6	0	3	20	17	3	18
Trasandinos	9	5	2	2	18	14	4	17
Sydney Cedars SC	9	4	0	5	28	21	7	12
Gladesville United	9	3	3	3	19	17	2	12
Colo Colo	8	4	0	4	15	16	-1	12
Gazy Lansvale	8	3	1	4	14	11	3	10
Lithgow Workmen	9	2	2	5	11	23	-12	8
Earlwood Wand	9	2	1	6	10	23	-13	7
Roosters FC	9	1	3	5	16	24	-8	6
Sporting SCC	9	1	1	7	8	28	-20	4

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION THREE RESERVE GRADE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Balmain SC	9	7	2	0	49	9	40	23
Trasandinos	9	6	2	1	25	12	13	20
Kellyville Kolts	9	5	3	1	20	12	8	18
Earlwood Wand	9	5	1	3	25	11	14	16
East Coast Magic	9	3	4	2	15	7	8	13
Gladesville United	9	2	6	1	20	14	6	12
Colo Colo	8	3	3	2	18	15	3	12
Sydney Cedars SC	9	3	2	4	16	13	3	11
Roosters FC	9	3	0	6	17	20	-3	9
Sporting SCC	9	2	1	6	8	41	-33	7
Gazy Lansvale	8	1	1	6	11	43	-32	4
Lithgow Workmen	9	0	1	8	4	31	-27	1

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Koalas fall from leading limb

By Aimee Brown

Competition leaders North West Sydney Koalas suffered their first defeat of the Arrive alive NSW Womens Super Legaue this weekend going down 5-0 clash to the NSW Academy.

It was a tight game, and both sides played a highly polished game, but on the day Academy had the edge and capitalised on their chances.

Academy had star player Leah Blayney back from the Matildas camp and she made her presence known by scoring two goals in the opening minutes of play.

The first, scored in the 8th minute was a quick one taken down from the midfield and tucked past the Koala's keeper, Cassie Kell, who had also just returned from the Matildas camp on the Gold Coast. In the 12th minute Blaney made use of a momentary opening in the Koala's defence to score her second goal, shooting from outside the 18-yard box.

After these quick goals the Koalas pressed down harder, pushing the ball into Academy's end, and creating a few good chances. An extremely tight defence prevented them from converting these chances into goals. Academy played a wide game, using the flanks to bring the ball down to their scoring end. Academy also created a number of gilt edged opportunities, but were denied by Cassie Kell who was having an outstanding game and pulled off many spectacular saves.

In the second half, the Koalas had slightly more ball possession than they had in the first half, but still couldn't penetrate Academy's defence.

Briony Holcombe scored Academy's third goal after a tidy cross from Servet Uzunlar in the 52nd minute, and the fourth Academy goal was scored by defence player Julia Bazi from a corner.

Wendy Graham had an excellent game for the Koalas, repeatedly taking on the Academy players and moving the ball down the left side.

On the right she was helped by Jo Burgess who also did an excellent job of bringing the ball down the flank, but could not navigate past Academy's defence to score. Academy's fifth and final goal was scored by Renée Cartwright from a spectacular kick in a crowded goal in the last minute of the game.

Despite the result, Koala's coach Michael Beckett was very happy with how his team played. "We had some good opportunities and I thought that overall our girls did a top job. It was one of the fastest games we've played, and we've had a good start to the season," Beckett said.

Academy's coach Alen Stajcic was overjoyed with the result and felt that it was the best game his team had played all season. "All the goals were brilliant, and to do that against such a good team is really gratifying," he said.

The Marconi Stallions had an important 6-1 win this weekend over the Macarthur Rams, which took them to the top of the table, knocking off previous competition leaders North West Sydney Koalas. The game was played out at Lynwood Park, and despite what the scoreline suggests, it was a well fought game for both sides. Macarthur had a strong first half, and by half time the score was 1-0 for Marconi after Fab Perfilio put a goal away in the 11th minute.

However, after the break Marconi came back stronger and scored five more goals to secure their win. Lisa Gilbert scored their second goal in the 51st minute, followed by Rebecca O'Neill in the 57th minute. Alicia Cavanagh put one away in the 65th minute and Kristy Rohrer scored their fifth goal in the 71st minute. Macarthur did notch up a consolation goal late in the game, courtesy of Michelle Carney who pinged into the top right of the goal from a free kick. But Marconi responded by scoring their sixth and final goal in the 82nd minute once again by Fab Perfilio.

The Wollongong Wolves had a home game at the BHP Centenary Ground against Nepean Association and came away with a 3-0 victory. Wollongong were the more dominant team of the match, but Nepean also put together some patches of very impressive football.

Wollongong scored in the 8th minute with a smoothly executed header by Taryn Ruiz, setting the tone for the game. In the 25th minute, Tamika Wearing scored the second goal for Wollongong from a free kick. Nepean managed to hold the score at 2-0 until the 73rd minute when Wollongong's Erica Holloway scored their final goal after a well-worked build up.

The Manly Warringah Dolphins journeyed out to Proctor Park to take on the Bathurst City Panthers. Bathurst used their home ground advantage and secured an important 1-0 victory.

The game was played in good spirits and both teams performed well. Bathurst initially came out stronger, and Lauren Armstrong scored what would become the winning goal in the 22nd minute. The Dolphins responded to this by pushing back and really put the pressure on towards the end of the first half.

Although the Dolphins created a number of good chances, they couldn't get past Bathurst's keeper to secure any points.

Ball possession was shared evenly by both teams and the game was fought out in the middle of the field. In the second half the play was more evenly matched and neither team could penetrate the others' defence, but Bathurst's early goal meant that they walked away with the victory.

UNSW travelled down to the Harrie Dening Centre to play Sutherland Association, with both teams walking away with a share of points from a scoreless draw.

Sutherland were still without Julie Murray who is still recovering from a niggling hamstring injury, but did welcome Thea Slatyer into the side for her first Arrive alive NSW Womens Super League appearance of the season. Slatyer was imposing at the back and showed glimpses of her class with her penetrating runs forward, but unfortunately midway through the second half, she landed awkwardly on her ankle and had to be substituted.

UNSW took advantage of this situation, and captain Sandra Stavrou created much trouble for the re-organised Sutherland defence with some searching runs down the left flank.

Although no goals were forthcoming, the match was a very close affair with Uni taking the game to their more fancied hosts.

The end-to-end action meant that neither team completely dominated the other, and the crowd on hand were treated to an enthralling battle. Excellent work by Belinda Barter in the Sutherland goal, and Ruth Jago at the UNSW end, coupled with solid defence from both sides meant that the scoreline did not budge from nil-all.

Arrive alive NSW WOMENS SUPER LEAGUE

ARRIVE ALIVE NSW WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE FIRST GRADE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Marconi Stallions	9	8	0	1	32	8	24	24
NW Sydney Koalas	9	7	1	1	21	12	9	22
NSW Academy	8	6	1	1	24	5	19	19
Macarthur Rams	9	4	2	3	21	20	1	14
Sutherland Asso	9	3	3	3	9	12	-3	12
Wollongong Wolves	9	3	2	4	12	12	0	11
UNSW	9	2	2	5	8	18	-10	8
Bathurst City Pan	9	2	1	6	9	18	-9	7
Manly Warringah	8	2	0	6	7	23	-16	6
Nepean Association	9	0	2	7	1	16	-15	2

ARRIVE ALIVE NSW WOMENS SUPER LEAGUE: ROUND 9:

FIRST GRADE: Macarthur Rams 1 (M Carney 77m) Marconi 6 (F Perfilio 11/82m L Gilbert 51m R ONeill 57m A Cavanagh 65m K Rohrer 71m), North West Sydney Koalas 0 NSW Academy 5 (L Blayney 8/12m B Holcombe 52m J Bazi 75m R Cartwright 89m), Sutherland Association 0 UNSW 0, Bathurst City Panthers 1 (L Armstrong 22m) Manly Warringah Dolphins 0, Wollongong Wolves 3 (T Ruiz 8m T Wearing 25m E Holloway 73m) Nepean Association 0.

GRADE 21: Macarthur Rams 0 Marconi 2, North West Sydney Koalas 1 NSW Academy 3, Sutherland Association 4 UNSW 1, Bathurst City Panthers 0 Manly Warringah Dolphins 2, Wollongong Wolves 2 Nepean Association 1.

ARRIVE ALIVE NSW WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE GRADE 21 /

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Marconi Stallions	9	7	1	1	28	8	20	22
NSW Academy	8	7	0	1	40	6	34	21
Sutherland Assoc	9	7	0	2	21	8	13	21
NW Sydney Koalas	9	5	1	3	17	15	2	16
Manly Warringah	8	5	0	3	21	7	14	15
Wollongong Wolves	9	4	1	4	8	15	-7	13
Nepean Association	9	4	0	5	16	32	-16	12
UNSW	9	2	0	7	7	30	-23	6
Bathurst City Pan	9	1	1	7	2	26	-24	4
Macarthur Rams	9	0	0	9	5	18	-13	0

University punishes Rage

By Aimee Brown

Competition leaders Sydney University had another win this weekend against Granville Rage at Sydney University Oval.

The final score was 5-0, but despite this large margin, both teams played some good football. Uni tried a new formation in the first half, and in the 29th minute, Carly Debenham put away their first goal. This was followed up in the 36th minute by a nicely played goal by Mel Pennington from a corner. The scoreline was 2-0 going into the second half, and Granville did well to hold Uni down until midway through the second half.

After half time Uni returned to their usual formation and things started to click, with Paula Kelly scoring a hat-trick for Uni in the final 30 minutes of the match. Two of the goals were scored in the 60th and 65th minute, after Kelly flicked them in from goal-mouth scrambles. Kelly put the final goal away in the last minute of the game, bringing the score up to 5-0.

First place challengers Central Coast United also had a win this weekend, bringing them within one point of the Sydney University on the table. The two top teams will face each other next weekend, which is bound to be an interesting game. Central Coast defeated the Roselands Raptors at Bennett Park 1-0. Central Coast controlled the game early, but some tight defence work by the Roselands' sweeper and keeper prevented them from scoring. Roselands were really fired up and played hard, managing a few breakaway attempts at goal, but couldn't find the back of the net. Roselands defence held Central Coast off until the 87th minute when Shannon Hockey put one away after a few close attempts, sealing the game for Central Coast.

The Gladesville Ravens had a close 2-1 win over Hawkesbury City at Bensons Lane Reserve.

It was an evenly matched game and both sides put up a very good fight. Both teams played a tight game, and there were some good opportunities and some great saves on either side.

Gladesville scored in the 15th minute courtesy of Margaret Corderoy, but Hawkesbury managed to hold them off from scoring any more for the rest of the first half. In the 60th minute, Hawkesbury's Megan Bertenshaw scored an equaliser with a well-worked goal. Both teams contested the ball vigorously, but Gladesville stole the lead in the 75th minute after Margaret Corderoy scored again.

St George Association defeated Blacktown Districts 4-2 at Francis Park this weekend, bringing them to equal third position on the ladder, sharing a 16 point total with Southern Branch.

St George had a fantastic first half and by half time the score was 3-0. Courtney Sneddon scored their first goal in the 10th minute, kicking it into the top right of the goal after a cross from Mel Sale. Sale scored a goal of her own in the 32nd minute, sending the ball sailing into the net from 25 yards away after a cleared corner.

St George's high scorer Angelina Koncurat scored their third goal with a well worked team goal, flicking it past the keeper. With this lead under their belt, St George came back strong in the second half, and Koncurat scored her second goal of the match with a powerful shot straight into the back of the net in the 47th minute, taking St George's lead to 4-0.

However, Blacktown refused to be walked over, and fought back late in the second half. Michelle Reilly-Brown scored their first goal from out wide after a good build up, and in the last minute of play, Nasrien Ridder put Blacktown's second away after a one-on-one opportunity with the St George keeper.

Arrive alive NSW WOMENS STATE LEAGUE

ARRIVE ALIVE NSW WOMEN'S STATE LEAGUE FIRST GRADE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Sydney University	8	7	1	0	35	5	30	22
Central Coast Utd	8	7	0	1	22	13	9	21
Southern Branch	8	5	1	2	31	10	21	16
St George Assoc	8	5	1	2	27	15	12	16
Gladesville Ravens	8	4	0	4	18	17	1	12
Blacktown Districts	8	3	0	5	13	20	-7	9
Granville Rage	8	2	0	6	13	25	-12	6
Hawkesbury City	8	1	1	6	5	23	-18	4
Roselands Raptors	8	0	0	8	2	38	-36	0

ARRIVE ALIVE NSW WOMENS STATE LEAGUE: ROUND 9:

FIRST GRADE: Blacktown Districts 2 (N Reilly-Brown 86m N Ridder 89m) St George Association 4 (C Snedden 10m M Sale 32m A Koncurat 37/47m), Roselands Raptors 0 Central Coast FC 1 (S Hockey 87m), Sydney University 5 (C Debenham 29m M Pennington 36m P Kelly 60/65/89m) Granville Rage 0, Hawkesbury City 1 (M Bertenshaw 60m) Gladesville Ravens 2 (M Corderoy 15/75m).

GRADE 21: Blacktown Districts 1 St George Association 3, Roselands Raptors 5 Central Coast FC 0, Sydney University 6 Granville Rage 1, Hawkesbury City 1 Gladesville Ravens 1.

ARRIVE ALIVE NSW WOMEN'S STATE LEAGUE GRADE 21

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Sydney University	8	6	1	1	23	5	18	19
St George Assoc	8	6	1	1	23	6	17	19
Blacktown Districts	8	6	0	2	26	12	14	18
Roselands Raptors	8	5	0	3	39	11	28	15
Central Coast Utd	8	4	2	2	17	13	4	14
Gladesville Ravens	8	3	1	4	17	22	-5	10
Hawkesbury City	8	1	1	6	4	29	-25	4
Southern Branch	8	1	0	7	10	35	-25	3
Granville Rage	8	1	0	7	14	40	-26	3

SOCCER NSW

www.soccernsw.com.au

Juniors meet their heroes

Ten junior players from across the Soccer NSW family had a once in a lifetime opportunity to meet their Socceroo heroes last week.

The players were part of the Socceroos sponsorship launch for Qantas at the Sydney Opera House.

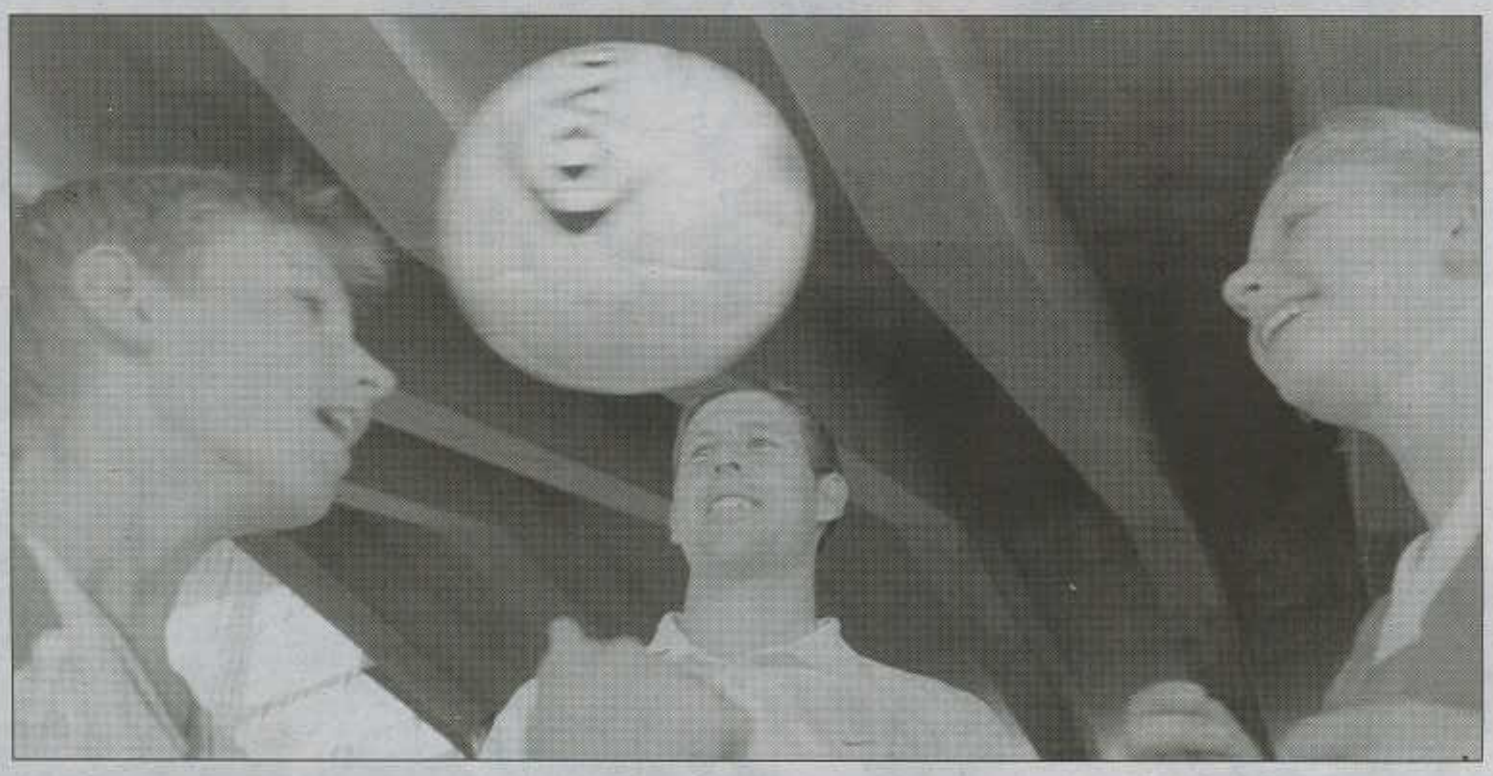
Qantas has secured naming rights for Australia's national teams and will also sponsor the National Talent Identification program.

The players were chosen from associations and clubs that had produced current Socceroo players, to show the pathway from the grassroots to the top of international football.

Ryan Hunter and Jaimie Van Woerkon travelled to Sydney from Wollongong, meeting the Illawarra's soccer hero Scott Chipperfield.

"Chippers' began his career as a four year old, first registering with the Illawarra Soccer Association.

Other Socceroos involved in the grassroots promotion were Mark Schwazer (ex-Southern Districts), David Zdrilic (St George) & Brett Emerton (Macarthur). The players and parents made the most of the chance to get autographs and photos.



HEADS UP: Illawarra youngsters Ryan Hunter, left, and Jaimie Van Woerkon get the inside word on the Socceroos from Scott Chipperfield, the former Wollongong Wolves Grand Final hero. They were together at the Opera House in Sydney in the build up to the Socceroos v Turkey match.

Blacktown wins Broughton Cup

Blacktown Association has won the 2004 Frank Broughton Cup, the annual event for under 11 association representative teams.

A 3-1 win the final over Nepean gave Blacktown the honors, with Southern Districts edging Granville for third place.

The late Frank Broughton was a stalwart of NSW amateur soccer. He held many official positions, including secretary of the Canterbury Association, registrar of Sydney Branch, registrar of the NSW Amateurs and manager of many touring State teams.

His efforts were acknowledged with life membership of Canterbury, Sydney Branch and the NSW Amateurs.

Enfield Rovers hosted the 2004 event, although there's a push for Canterbury to become the permanent host.

Bookies back amateurs

The Manly Allambie club in the Manly Warringah Association has been given permission by the Soccer NSW Board to accept sponsorship from a bookmaker. But the Board declared that such arrangements with junior teams or associations remain prohibited.

Sportingbet is a telephone and Internet wagering operation, part of a British listed firm Sportingbet plc.

The sponsor relationship between club and company came from a social contact between a Manly Allambie player and a Sportingbet executive.

A Board resolution of May 12 gives approval to such arrangements with sports gambling companies and agencies, only in the case where the sponsorship is restricted to senior teams.

Soccer NSW Lodges Registration of Interest

Soccer NSW has lodged a Registration of Interest document with the Australian Soccer Association in relation to the new national competition.

The ASA required registrations by the deadline of Friday 14 May.

The Information Memorandum from the ASA, which is expected to outline detailed plans for the new national competition, is yet to be released.

A précis of the Soccer NSW Registration of Interest will be posted on the website from Friday 21 May.

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Turkey Draw First Blood Against Australia

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